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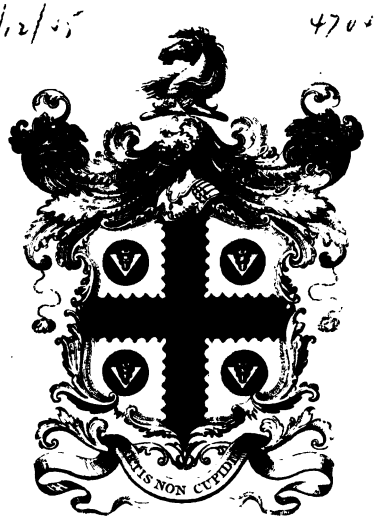

Edward Charles Fletcher

THE

OXONIANS.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
J. B. NICHOLS AND SON, 25, PARLIAMENT STREET.

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THE OXONIANS;

A

GLANCE AT SOCIETY.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

"THE ROUÉ."

Il n'y a point d'années que les folies des hommes ne puissent fournir un volume.

La Bruyere.

——For I am—look to't—
An Oxford scholar, and can do't.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
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THE OXONIANS.

CHAPTER I.

CONTRASTS.

Thou art all a lie.

LADY ORVILLE had truly described herself as a busy woman, in the midst of a busy world — for her plots and intrigues were so numerous, embraced so many objects, and diverged into so many ramifications, that her active mind was for ever on the stretch of full employment. With that influence, however, which she derived from the adventitious circumstances of rank and for-

tune, what a vast deal of real good might not have emanated from a mind possessed of so much energy; but the gratification of one early bias—the being overpowered by one youthful passion, occasioning a first dereliction from moral principle, turned her from good to evil. Instead of retracing her steps—instead of regaining the position she had lost in her own opinion, she thought only of the preservation of that of others; certain, that as long as she succeeded in this object, in a worldly sense, she was secure. Lady Orville had early loved with that passionate fondness which women of her temperament only know. This feeling had been excited by a man well calculated to give an ingenuous woman a notion of the perfection of human nature, as far as person and accomplishments were concerned. He had been struck by her peculiar style of beauty—her raven tresses—her dark eye, changing in its colour and brightness with the varying sentiments of her soul—her form, growing, with her mind, into premature and precocious womanhood, were all calculated to ignite the uncontrolled passions of a libertine;

and such indeed, in the full extent of the word, was the man upon whom Lady Cecilia Devereux had fixed the first passionate feelings of her young heart.

Almost domesticated together, from the near connection existing between their different families; every opportunity was afforded to Arlington to cultivate and increase the growing passion, of which, young as he was, his experience in woman soon made him strongly sensible. Deluded by his attentions, Cecilia, on her part, never avoided him: she was too proud to imagine for a moment that any man could have other intentions towards a woman of her rank than those of marriage; she felt that she loved him with her whole soul, and, unused to curb her inclinations, or to restrain her caprice, she gave herself up to the society of one, who, to use her own words, had first called her heart and its feelings into existence.

Lady Cecilia had heard and read of seduction and desertion; and, with the rest of her sex, had shuddered at and vituperated the vil-

lanies of men. But she thought these circumstances only took place with inferior orders of women, and never imagined any man, however presumptuous, would for a moment contemplate, or ever be guilty of, such conduct towards herself.

Her insidious love encouraged this self-security, at the same time that Arlington fed the high passions which endangered it by every means in his power. Delicate sentiments, subversive of moral principles, were inculcated; a style of reading which effectually, though gradually, undermines a strict sense and respect for virtue, was introduced; and Lady Cecilia only awakened from her delirium to find herself one of those seduced and deserted beings which she supposed to belong only to a different order of society; and the victim of one of those men whose conduct she had vituperated, and whose power she had despised.

When she first discovered that Arlington never intended to make her his wife; or at least had changed his purpose; her proud heart could scarcely restrain from taking such a vengeance

upon her betrayer, as would have exposed herself and ruined her name for ever. Her only confidante, however, had sufficient prudence to regulate the violence of her passions, so as to secure the preservation of her fame. This lady, entreating, and succeeding in procuring, Arlington's temporary absence; urged the immediate acceptance of the old Earl of Orville, who had long been a suitor to Lady Cecilia, as a husband. Smothering all the indignation to which Arlington had transformed her love, and determining still on some future and signal revenge, she saw, as the violence of her feeling subsided, the necessity as well as the prudence of silencing any thing like an invidious report. The old Earl was therefore accepted, the marriage hastened, and the remembrance, or at least the effects, of Cecilia's early crime, concealed beneath the blazonry of a coronet.

Her mind, however, had been essentially perverted. Her naturally violent passions, once let loose, burst through the floodgates of reason and restraint, and carried her impetuously along in their wild career. She soon heartily despised a

husband who submitted to all her dictates with the obedience of a dotard; she considered his name the only valuable appendage of her marriage, and used his authority only as a cloak to cover her excesses, and to preserve her caste in that society, where she was still received and courted, from the convenient opinion of "a blot being no blot till it is hit." Her beauty made her attractive to the men, and her wit rendered her formidable to the women; so that, through admiration on the one side, and fear on the other; the Countess of Orville had led a splendid career; till time, by lowering the influence of some passions, and heightening that of others, had made her as ambitious of power as she had formerly been of pleasure.

In several instances Lady Orville had so far overstepped the prescribed bounds, that none other but herself would probably have been able to have preserved her station; but she knew the world well, and the effect of these instances was immediately obliterated by some splendid fete, more brilliant than that which had gone before. Orville House was a delightful mansion for the

dissipated, and the many shut their eyes, or closed their ears to the rumours of frailties, of which there were no flagrant proofs to substantiate the correctness, rather than debar themselves from the convenience and pleasure of visiting Orville House.

There was a certain set, however, whom Lady Orville, with all her arts, could never tempt within her doors; and into whose circles she could never, with all her talents and brilliant powers of entertainment, gain admittance with any degree of intimacy. These were not those who deemed themselves exclusives, merely from the circumstance of elevated rank and fashion; but who set a higher value on an untarnished name, than upon either of these adventitious claims to distinction; and who would not permit their daughters to visit or to be seen in any mansion where scandal had been busy with the name of its mistress; and thank heaven that the circle of those of our aristocracy, who act upon these sentiments, is yet sufficiently large to redeem the character of that elevated class from the conduct of those few individuals who are a blot

upon the escutcheon of fashionable society. In spite of the sway and influence she held in the fashionable world, and which made her the envy of two thirds of her numerous acquaintance, this exclusion from the most select, though perhaps not the highest in rank, embittered many hours of Lady Orville's existence; for, with all the bravado with which, in her letters to her *divorcée* friend, she treated the opinions and ceremonies of the world, and of society; and in spite of the contempt with which she chose to treat them in her correspondence, or in the immediate circle of her intimates, where a masque was no longer necessary; there was no person more sensitive to, or who shrunk with more horror and dismay from the effects of any rumour that would have imparted to herself the slightest dereliction from the established rules of propriety. Neither was there any person who visited the *discovered* derelictions of her friends with more severity than Lady Orville.

This anxiety on the part of the vicious to avoid the stigma attached to their pursuits, is one of the greatest triumphs of virtue over

vice; and the care with which the semblance of virtue is preserved, by those whose actions and habits are devoid of its reality, proves their consciousness of the value of that which they are deserting, and the worthlessness of the pursuits in which they are engaged.

It has been often observed that people take much more pains to become thieves, than would be necessary to make them honest men; that more time has been spent in learning to effect a burglarious entry to a house, or to pick a pocket scientifically, than would have been necessary to have acquired some reputable trade, that would have procured for the possessor the power of gaining a respectable livelihood to the end of their days. It is the same with regard to the virtues and vices of society. Few people can imagine the labour of that life which is nothing but one continued Lie. The exertion to be virtuous must be nothing in the comparison with that which is necessary, first, in the career of vice, and secondly, in its concealment.

We are again moralizing, though our second

volume is scarcely begun; and when we ought to be proceeding with our tale.

Lady Orville has already mentioned her intention of inviting to Orville House, on his arrival from India, her cousin, Admiral Frankley, who was immensely rich, and whose wealth the Countess had determined should be distributed in her family. To ensure this, it was necessary to keep from him a niece, the daughter of a beloved sister, whom he had treated harshly on account of her marriage, and to whom, from sheer repentance, he was very likely to leave the whole of his fortune.

A long and arduous professional life at sea had only permitted Admiral Frankley to see his cousin, the Countess, occasionally when on shore, and during these visits he had been charmed by the open, hearty manner, in which he had been greeted, and by the welcome with which he had been received. Now, therefore, that he had retired from active service, he gladly embraced the proposition of remaining at Orville House until he had completed an establishment of his own.

The previous visits, however, of the gallant admiral had never been made during the height of the London season; and arriving before Lady Orville expected, or was prepared for him, he had no idea of the life into which he was so suddenly introduced, and by which his head was literally bewildered.

The perpetual parties, the incessant occupation of the knocker, and the continued hurry of party after party, made him think every body mad, and he began to fear they would drive him so likewise. As to the routs; he would rather have fought an enemy's seventy-four, or sailed through the Dardanelles, under the fire of the batteries, than have encountered the noise and confusion which attended them; and it was with some difficulty that by closing his doors he excluded the noise attendant upon them.

Warm in his temper, as the climate in which he had passed so great a portion of his life, he was as unable to controul the passion into which he was thrown, by what he called the d——d follies of the people around him, as he was to get rid of his sea habits, and assimilate his pursuits to those of Lady Orville and her family. But

if there was the violence, there was also the generosity of the sailor. If there was the roughness of the element on which he had passed his life, there was an excellence of heart that compensated for all his foibles. Brave as a lion he was gentle as a lamb to the leadings of affection; and the only thing which he swore he never could or would forgive was that want of sincerity, which he technically called fighting under false colours.

One may easily imagine such a character very much misplaced in an establishment where the whole system was one universal deception, where all was one scene of social fraud, from the blandishments of the mistress down to the civility of the servants. But that which annoyed him more than any thing was his being denied to his friends by the porter.

Some short time after his arrival he burst into the boudoir of the Countess, quite in a frenzy of passion, and indulged himself in a pretty round oath or two against the porter of the establishment.

"Come, my dear Admiral," exclaimed the Countess, who was determined to humanize

him, as she called it, if possible; "you know have promised me to give up this odious sea habit of swearing."

"D—— it, my lady cousin, a'n't I breaking myself of it as fast as I can," retorted the Admiral; "and if your ladyship, and your people, would break yourselves of your odious land habit of lying, I should not have so much occasion for my sea habit of swearing."

"Lying, my dear Admiral?"

"Lying, yes lying, my lady cousin. Have not I just heard that my old messmate, Jack Martin, hoisted the lion's head signal at your door for me yesterday, and that your jackanapes of a porter told him 'not at home.' D——, well I wont swear, but I really believe that fellow is wound up by your ladyship in the morning, and lies by clockwork all the rest of the day."

"Nay, my dear Admiral, that is no lie," replied her ladyship.

"No lie — but it isn't the truth tho', and ——, no I wont swear; but curse me if I know

any thing so like a lie as that which is just the contrary to the truth," retorted the Admiral.

" But, my dear Admiral, this is one of the white lies which is rendered necessary by the present state of society," said Lady Orville.

" Then society must be in a —— well, well, in a very bad state, to require such a system," reiterated the Admiral.

" But, after all, what does it signify, my dear Admiral, whether you saw the poor Lieutenant or not?" asked Lady Orville.

" D—— it, madam, I beg your pardon for swearing, but that Admiral ought to be"—— here Lady Orville made a sign, " well, well, I wont swear, but that Admiral ought to be ——, you know what I mean, who could bear to shut the port-hole of his house in the face of that messmate on shore, who had boldly stood the brunt of an enemy's fire at his port-holes at sea."

" Well, well, Admiral, only favour me with a list of the persons to whom you wish to be at home."

" At home!" exclaimed the Admiral, in-

terrupting her, "I am at home to the whole world. As I have faced my enemies abroad, I can face my friends at home. I never make promises I don't mean to fulfil, nor contract debts I don't mean to pay. Nor is there a face I'm ashamed to see in the world, excepting the unblushing one of a modern fine lady, or the effeminate one of what you call an exquisite."

"But then you know," said Lady Orville, in her sweetest voice, "to persons of our rank, there are so many applications for charity, relief, and one nonsense or another."

"Then the least we can do," again interrupted the Admiral, "is to see the applicants ourselves, that if we can't relieve their wants, the kindness of our refusal may soften their disappointment, and not leave them to suppose our hearts as hard as our door, from the surliness of the porter who shuts it in their face."

"But, my dear Admiral, there are some troublesome visitors, who, without such a regulation as this, would be always intruding themselves into our drawing-rooms."

"I know there are," rejoined the Admiral;

" there are your young puppies with their waspish waists and empty pates, who set themselves up for men, while the razor makes voyages of discovery on their chin, without being able to find a hair. These I would bow out of the door, and send back to their boarding-schools. Then there are your mustachioed and whiskered foreigners, who with their tweedle dum and tweedle dee, give themselves the airs of princes, set young women mad, and ruin our native fiddlers. These I would kick out of the window."

" Well, but, my dear Admiral—"

" And well but, my dear lady cousin; who knows, I say, but that my poor lost niece may find out her hard hearted uncle, and one day knock at the door, and be turned adrift upon the wide and pitiless ocean of life, without a pilot or a rudder, through one of these cursed white lies of ' not at home.' "

" Ah, Admiral," said Lady Orville, with a sigh, " I am afraid your hopes of discovering your niece are futile. It is now two years since her father failed."

" Ha—that rascal to marry my poor sister

under false colours, and against my father's consent, and then to hide her and her child from me in their poverty."

"Aye, aye, I always predicted how it would end; merchant's wives, indeed, setting up to vie with their betters," exclaimed Lady Orville.

"Betters, Lady Orville! the wife of a British merchant has no betters; she sits like the figure of Britannia in the corner of a sea chart, with the horn of plenty in her hand, and the four quarters of the globe pouring out their riches at her feet. Nor is there any one more entitled to the enjoyment of luxuries himself, than the merchant, who risks his fortune to procure them for others."

"Excepting the sailor, who fights for their preservation, my dear Admiral," interrupted Lady Orville, in her most insinuating tones of flattery; "I think you will allow that."

"Eh, what? Egad you are right," chuckled the Admiral. "Yes, certainly, the sailor—Egad, my lady cousin you are a very sensible woman, when you suffer your heart to speak instead of your education—yes, yes, those who

fight for them indeed; d—— it, that's a good speech, cousin Orville—and one may swear at what one hears so seldom."

Lady Orville smiled at the effect of a little flattery, even upon the rude nature of the rough and honest seaman; and the idea passed through her mind, that human nature was the same in every class of society; and that flattery, properly administered, was a dose suited to every palate. It is the difference of the seasoning, thought she, and its influence is the same over all mankind.

"But, my lady, this niece of mine; have you yet learnt any intelligence of her?" anxiously asked the Admiral.

Lady Orville thought this a good opportunity to strike a blow, which she had long meditated, at the claims of this niece, whom she considered the only obstacle to her certainty of the Admiral's fortune.

"Why, Admiral," said she, musing, and speaking with apparent unwillingness, "to be candid with you——but no it will give you pain."

"Speak out, my lady, speak out, never mince

the matter; if you have got any thing to say, say it."

"But really, my dear Admiral, it grieves me to utter any thing that may give you pain;" and Lady Orville again hesitated.

"Fire away, my lady—speak—never mind me."

"Why then, Admiral," continued the Countess, "you know in our inquiries about your sister's child, we traced her and her father to Devonshire."

"Well, I know it," said the Admiral, anxiously.

"On his death (this is the painful part of the intelligence) we could hear nothing further of your niece, than that she had suddenly quitted the place, in company with a young gentleman, nearly a stranger, but who had been very assiduous in his attention to her for some few weeks previous to the old gentleman's death; and they do say, but the world is always very scandalous, that her conduct with regard to this young gentleman hastened that melancholy event.

"It's a lie. It's a ——, but I wont swear—

but I'm sure it's a lie. What, the daughter of my sister Fanny. ——, I wont believe it."

"I would not give credence to it at first. Indeed I am very unwilling to believe it now; but there was, I am afraid, intelligence too positive to be doubted," continued Lady Orville; "and it has been this that has made us all so backward in talking on the subject."

"I'm thunderstruck!" exclaimed the Admiral, who, independently of the impossibility of his suspecting Lady Orville of any other falsehood than one of her harmless white lies, was always too ready to give credence to every thing he heard; "I'm thunderstruck! a daughter of my sister Fanny! But who is the villain? I'll hunt him through the world! I'll have him hanged at the yard-arm: I'll blow him to atoms at the muzzle of a four-and-twenty pounder. I'll—oh my poor sister! I am glad she did not live to see it. But, my Lady, are you sure; are you certain?"

"We will send for those from whom we have gained our information," my dear Admiral, "and you shall judge for yourself; perhaps you

may detect something that may throw a doubt upon our surmises."

"I'm sure I shall. Send directly," exclaimed the agitated Admiral; "send for them directly, my Lady; and I'll cut their tongues out, if I find they have lied."

"Nay, nay, my dear Admiral, calm yourself; and I will, in the mean time, send after the different people, from whom this information has been obtained."

At this moment Langley was announced, as being in the drawing-room. He having promised to convoy the Admiral, as he called it, through the new streets of the metropolis.

"Hush, my Lady; not a word before him. Though I like this fellow too, for he rescued me from those racketty young fellows; but he always appears to me scudding under false colours; hanging out smiles, and having nothing but sighs and tears abroad. Well, well, you've shocked me. I'll be ——, well, I wont swear—no, I wont—I'll forget the unworthy slut. No, I can't. When she'd such an uncle too! But she did not know that; however, never mind. My

Lady, your hand;" and he handed Lady Orville from her boudoir to the drawing-room, with all the punctilio of the old school.

Lady Orville congratulated herself on the success of this hint, upon which she built her hopes of driving his niece entirely from his mind. The great difficulty was, what to do with the Admiral, so as to blind him to all her other intrigues and manœuvrings; and being afraid to leave him much to his own observation, all she could do, was to find employment and amusement for him.

To expect more than common attention to the old gentleman, from a son and daughter, who, with no very great degree of filial respect for their mother, had all their own schemes of pleasure to attend to, she knew was useless; she had therefore pressed two or three of the young danglers about Orville House into the service, and who were only too happy to oblige the gay Countess, to act as cicisbeos to the old Admiral, who could do very well as long as he was not left alone. Among these Langley was the foremost, and generally the most constant. He had first met

the old Admiral at the opera, where he had inadvertently wandered into the *coulisses;* but astounded and bewildered by the exhibition he there witnessed, he thought Bedlam had been let loose, and not being able to find his way back to the front of the house, had been misdirected by some roguish sparks, into a passage which led him under the stage, where Langley, attracted by his lusty "yeo-ho's," and "avasts," found him in the dark, grappling, as he called it, with a trap-door, not knowing which way to turn himself; and half-frightened out of his senses at the hubbub of the machinery, which he said, "made such an infernal noise down in that d—d cockpit."

They afterwards met at Orville House, and it being among Langley's numerous plans, to make some use of the interest of that family, which had been most profusely promised by the young Earl, he did every thing to keep in favour with the Countess. Finding, therefore, that paying court to the old Admiral was a very acceptable, as well as not an unpleasant mode of accom-

plishing his end, an intimacy was established between them, which proved agreeable to both.

The Admiral thought him a good fellow, and hearing from the Countess of his misfortunes, he wished that he had been brought up to the navy, that he might have got him promoted, and have taken him in the service.

This Langley set down to the score of his usual ill-luck; here he had made a friend, and a powerful one, but unfortunately his power and influence lay in a direction where it could be of no utility to him. He could be of no use at the Admiralty; he was too old to commence the service as a mid.; he had done nothing to entitle him to the consideration of the Government. In short, he had nothing to recommend him but his misfortunes and his classical education; the first of which the Admiral pronounced the worst introduction in the world, and the latter to be "d—d nonsense."

Admiral Frankley had been so long used to command, and to be implicitly obeyed at sea, that he could not help exerting the same authority on shore.

Like many others he had his hobby-horse or mania. It was, however, an amiable one, since it consisted in an attempt at making people happy. It is true that, like many others, he wished to accomplish his end in his own way rather than in theirs. Although unmarried, and generally railing against the holy estate of matrimony, no old maid had a greater inclination to match-making than himself; he delighted in discovering an attachment, and prided himself in accelerating an éclaircissement. In this pursuit, however, he was far from being very successful; for, once imbibing a notion that two people were attached to each other, it was with great difficulty that he could believe himself mistaken; and thus he often produced extraordinary scenes, and placed persons in very awkward situations by attempting the denouement of an attachment which had existed only in his own imagination. On these occasions the poor admiral was a complete marplot, and the moment he took it into his head that any one in whom he was interested had taken a "cargo of love aboard," he watched both parties with a jea-

lousy equal to that of the lovers themselves; interfered in every stage of the business; took upon himself to do quite as much as though he were the father or guardian of one or both of them; and above all, never permitted what he called "false colours" to be hung out, by either one or the other, without doing his utmost to expose their hypocrisy.

It may easily be supposed that this was rather an awkward character to be placed in the midst of such a manœuvring family as that of the Orvilles; and, more particularly, from the Hartley family, as well as the father of Forrester having been old and valued friends of the admiral, he thought himself authorized to interfere in all their plans.

He had heard of Forrester's attachment, and had been led to understand that it was returned by Emily; thus Lady Orville had the greatest difficulty in preventing his promoting their union, so contrary to her wishes and projects. At the same time she sought to take advantage of this disposition, by attempting to persuade him that Emily was attached to her son; being

fully aware that, if he once imbibed this idea, he would do every thing to bring about the match, and perhaps influence Orville to determine on the marriage by some decisive promise with regard to the disposition of his own property; for she saw that his attachment to the Hartleys was such, that they would certainly share his fortune with her own children, should the admiral die without discovering his niece. Thus the double marriage of the children became doubly desirable.

Here was a web which it took all Lady Orville's abilities to weave successfully; and a series of plans, which were every moment in danger of derangement by the open-hearted honesty of the straight forward admiral. He, however, seeing various couples proceeding in the path to matrimony, was delighted at promoting what he conceived to be the wishes of all parties, and soon became as busy as Lady Orville herself in the politics of the various marriages which he imagined to be on the tapis.

CHAPTER II.

DREAMS AND REALITIES.

In my mind's eye, Horatio.—SHAKSPEARE.

THERE is hardly a more dangerous character in the world to its possessor, or a more useless one to others, than the man who lives on his own imagination—the day dreamer, who exists in an imaginary state of activity, while lazily lolling in his easy chair, or idly sauntering in a walk, and who has no other end in view than the indulgence of that habit of fancying scenes and circumstances which have no other foundation than the chimera of his own brain.

It is thus, that some spend years in picturing to the mind's eye the circumstances which pro-

duce wealth—imagine themselves its possessor; and anticipate the uses or abuses they will make of it. Fancy paints them in their splendid equipage; pictures them surrounded by attendants, and dining from services of plate; till old age surprises them still in their original poverty, when it is too late to realize the dreams of a diseased imagination.

Others, whose minds, or rather whose fancies dwell on glory—imagine battles, and think of guns and trumpets, and gunpowder and slaughter, without ever having heard a shot fired, or a sword drawn, excepting in Hyde Park, or on Hounslow Heath—ride through fields of slain as triumphant conquerors—imagine the cries of victory, and the records of their own proud deeds, and finish the airy romance which their mind has conjured up, by picturing themselves the hero of the Court, their button-holes graced by orders, and their brows decorated with a coronet; received with a gracious smile by their monarch; greeted with the acclamations of the multitude; welcomed by the waving handker-

chiefs and bright eyes of the fair sex, and viewed with envy by the other.

Some, whose minds and dispositions have a bias to the tenderer passions, and the softer delights of existence, give themselves up to dreams of love; whisper the soft tale of their affections in imagination, picture its favourable reception, think on all the ceremonies of their marriage, and wake from their dream only, when they read in the Morning Post, that their mistress has been married at St. George's church to another.

Such a character was Langley. In the midst of his prosperity these day dreams had no influence on his circumstances, and perhaps added to his happiness. He could then afford to dream, and might, perhaps, have had the power frequently to realize the dreams in which he could spend so many hours of his existence. But in his poverty it was different. Hours were spent in unprofitable scheming, which ought to have been devoted to active exertion. Petitions and solicitations were dreamt of, and their suc-

cess anticipated, but never acted upon. No project was planned, either by himself or his wife, that Langley did not resolve to adopt; but these resolutions were never put into effect. From the moment any project was conceived, his active and sanguine mind began to imagine the result; and he would walk for hours ruminating upon the events that might accrue, imagining the whole history of his future life to which the pursuit of this plan was to give a new colouring; and would return home without having taken one step towards its accomplishment. His wife saw this failing with regret; lamented it with bitterness, and became almost hopeless of any change in a disposition, which, from habit, was become almost a disease.

As poverty, however, pressed more closely; as the bitterness of his fate daily increased; as every hope which, almost unacknowledged by himself, he had cherished, that the justice of the heir at law would at last make some provision, out of the immense wealth which he had derived so unexpectedly, for one whom his prosperity had rendered pennyless, faded away; he at

length became roused by the absolute necessity of effecting something.

Lord Orville had been profuse in his promises; Langley felt himself to be well received by the family; he was always a welcome guest at the table; was never "de trop" in Lady Orville's carriage or Opera box; and was frequently the young Peer's companion in his St. James's morning stroll, or in his cabriolet promenade in the Park. These noble people likewise frequently condescended to make use of him in various ways. His talents were such as rendered him an agreeable companion; there was no way in which his presence could cross any of their various schemes; and Langley was pronounced by all to be a particular favourite at Orville House.

All these circumstances had been revolved in his own mind, and elaborately detailed to his wife by Langley, when he determined on making the application alluded to in a foregoing chapter: and the knowledge of the actual power which the Orvilles possessed by their influence

in various quarters, really afforded them very rational grounds for his hope of success.

Still, however, day after day passed without the experiment having been made. Langley would remain for hours picturing to himself the reception which would be given to his petition, and imagining a long train of results which promoted him from the humble secretaryship, he hoped at first to attain, to some prominent and important appointment. Yet this, alas, was only in his imagination; and he returned home daily to his wife in the same state of poverty, without having advanced one step, or made one exertion.

At length, on the morning after the last party described at Orville House, Langley really determined to make his long-projected application to Lord Orville, who had, during the dinner of the preceding day, been more than usually kind and familiar, and more than commonly profuse in his offers of service.

On all other occasions, Langley had approached Orville House, if not with a light

heart, with a confident step. Certain of his welcome; with no other motive than that of adding to the circle within, and suiting his morning arrangements with theirs; the knocker was applied with as much ease by Langley, as by the most independent of the frequenters of the gay mansion. This morning, however, he approached with a slow and hesitating step, which became slower as he approached the house; twice he entered the portico, and twice retreated without knocking at the door. At length, taking a turn round the square (there is nothing like action to re-string the relaxed nerves), he summoned courage, and gave his usual rap, which was alertly attended to by the fat porter, who appeared an enviable being at this moment to Langley, since he had his place, and had no favours to ask.

Lord Orville was with Forrester, who, having called to pay his respects to Miss Hartley, had been purposely shown into the library, where Orville had detained him until he heard the carriage roll away that was to carry his mother and Emily upon a long round of morning visits,

and upon a pilgrimage to all the lace venders in St. James's.

Emily had naturally expected such a visit, yet had internally felt it a relief that it had not been paid; though she agreed with Lady Orville in an observation, that it was certainly very remiss in Mr. Forrester to pass the first morning of his arrival in London without paying his respects, and bringing news of her dear Lady Emily.

Forrester, during his detention by Lord Orville, was upon thorns; for he felt that the result of his morning's interview with Emily might either confirm his fears, or remove his doubts for ever; yet Lord Orville was so diffuse in his conversation; entered upon such various subjects; and discussed so many matters, with such an appearance of interest to himself, that poor Forrester found it impossible to escape.

At length, being aware that the carriage was gone, Orville suddenly finished a sentence with, "But I beg your pardon; I am detaining you from Miss Hartley, who is doubtless anxious to see you, and to hear news from the Grove."

He rang the bell, and desired the servant to shew Mr. Forrester up to Miss Hartley.

"Miss Hartley has been gone out with my Lady some time, my Lord," said the servant; to the evident mortification of Forrester, and to the apparent surprise of Lord Orville.

To Forrester, suspense was worse than certainty; and it was thus continued for an indefinite period, at a time when every moment appeared an age.

At this instant Monsieur Fripon announced Langley, as desiring to speak with Lord Orville alone.

Forrester, whose heart was ever alive to the distress of his fellow-creatures, in a moment banished the effects of his own disappointment, to enquire of Orville if he knew any thing of Langley's affairs; and if he had yet succeeded in doing any thing to redeem his fortnnes.

"Faith, no!" replied Lord Orville, coldly—"He is a very clever fellow—a genius—quite the fashion with a certain set—entertaining beyond any thing; like Yorick, 'a fellow of infinite jest.' He is good enough to amuse my

friends; it was all I wanted; I enquired no farther—Ah! my dear Langley, how do you do? I am delighted to see you;" greeting the entrance of Langley with a hearty shake of the hand.

"Quite well, I thank your lordship;" answered Langley, with an embarrassed air; for Langley was not the man to prefer a petition either with grace or confidence.

"Langley," said Forrester, also shaking him heartily by the hand, "I am glad to renew my acquaintance with you; and whenever you can quit the gay metropolis for a few weeks, remember Forrester Lodge will be open to receive you, and you will delight me by becoming my guest. —Lord Orville, I leave you to your business with Langley, and must charge you with my respects, and the expression of my disappointment to Miss Hartley;" and so saying he quitted the room.

Langley now felt his embarrassment redouble: instead of his usual ease of manner, he could neither sit nor stand still. He felt a blush stealing over his face, and his confusion of mind

increased, until he was in some measure relieved by Lord Orville saying—

"Why, my dear Langley, what made you leave us so early last night? we had never found you more entertaining—but, I suppose, some amour; some love in the case. You poets are devils among the women."

"Oh no, my Lord; no amour," replied Langley; "no love in the case;" and his mind reverted to his wife and the second floor. "I retired gratified beyond measure at having had the honor to contribute to the pleasure of your Lordship's party."

"Oh, I never saw you in finer feather; you were the zest of the evening. I don't know what we should have done without you."

"Oh!" thought Langley, "'tis done; I am a made man. I am a fool not to strike while the iron is hot."

"But you requested to see me alone?" continued Orville.

"True, my Lord, I did take that liberty," replied Langley, hesitating—

"Liberty! Langley. Nay, among friends, these things are no liberties." All this encouraged Langley to throw off some portion of his diffidence, and urged by his necessities, and encouraged by Orville's kindness, he proceeded—

"The fact is—I mean—Sir—that is—I have presumed that our acquaintance has not endured so long without my pretending to some portion of your Lordship's confidence and friendship—" Here he came to a full stop; but was again encouraged by Lord Orville's replying:

"Certainly. I know none of my acquaintance I esteem so much; none so well entitled to my esteem."

"My Lord, you do me honor. It is therefore that I presume to remind your Lordship—of the kind offers of service you have made me at various periods—and of a promise—"

"A promise!" exclaimed Lord Orville.

"Yes: one day, after dinner, your Lordship did me the honor to promise to use your influence with his Grace of———; and I now pre-

sume to remind you of my necessities, and to request its performance." The petition was now fairly out; and Langley, with downcast eye, awaited the result; but was immediately relieved by the kindness of Lord Orville's reply.

"My dear Langley," said he, "this frankness delights me. Believe me, nothing will give me greater pleasure than to be of service to one I esteem so much."

"Oh, my Lord, I knew it; I knew I was not wrong in calculating on your Lordship's kindness," said Langley.

"Indeed you were not, Langley," said Lord Orville, in a tone of sympathy, calculated to remove Langley's embarrassment. "Depend upon it, I will take the first opportunity of seeing my noble friend. I will lay your whole case before him, and, backed by my recommendation, have very little doubt of success."

"My Lord, you overpower me with gratitude. I cannot express the fullness of those thanks with which my heart is overflowing;" exclaimed Langley, nearly overpowered by his feelings.

"Never mention it, my dear fellow," replied Orville. "The only use of power is to serve our friends; and you will never want one while I am here; and though at present I must wish you a good morning, command me on all occasions, I beseech you."

Langley, in this dismissal, saw only the delicacy which would not prolong the embarrassment of his situation, or put him to the trouble of returning his thanks; and saying, "My Lord, you confound me by your goodness," pressed Lord Orville's offered hand. "I take my leave with a deep sense of the gratitude I owe your Lordship."

"Depend upon my exertions. I trust soon to give you a good account of my mission; and to congratulate you on its success. Adieu, mon ami. Au revoir."

Langley could scarcely refrain from tears of joy and gratitude. His eyes were suffused and his utterance choked with the fullness of his heart, as he hastily quitted the room, internally blessing his patron for his kindness; and all anx-

iety to impart to his wife the good tidings of his success. Lord Orville rang the bell, which was immediately answered by his valet; and, coolly taking a pinch of snuff, he deliberately said:

"Fripon, tell the porter to say 'Not at home' to Mr. Langley for the future."

CHAPTER III.

A MEETING.

'Twas she to whom in former days
Had been inscribed his earliest lays;
She to whom his earliest vow
Was given—tho' broken now.—ANON.

WHAT in the name of wonder would or could become of a woman of fashion in the course of a long morning (when she happens to make one by rising before two, and is disinclined for visiting), if it were not for shopping? If it were not for the delight of spending their fathers', their husbands', or their own money, on the thousand little *et ceteras* which the London shops present to tempt the money from their purses, or their names into the ledgers of those traders in women's vanities with which the metropolis abounds, and who are so obsequious and obliging till about two months after they have sent in their bills.

The morning toilet finished; the maid worried out of her life; the chocolate despatched; the scandalous chronicles of the daily papers discussed; the initial of the heroes and heroines of some adventure just budding into notoriety guessed at, to the destruction of the fair fame of some dear friend; the party of the evening before canvassed, and that of the ensuing one anticipated; what could a woman of fashion do with her time for the rest of the morning, when not inclined for visits: but for the dear delights of shopping?

Luckily for mortals under these circumstances, there are such places as Harding's in Pall-mall, Howel and James's in Regent-street, or, as a *pis aller*, the bazaars: and do not let little people fancy that the bazaars are despised by the great ones; for if they do they are very much mistaken. We have ourselves seen one or two of the exclusives among marchionesses and countesses lounging their half hour away upon a bazaar counter, giving the little *vendeuses* behind it ten times more trouble than was ever experienced from a plebeian, and thinking them

fully repaid by the honour of speaking to a peeress.

Well, but to shopping. Shopping we know to be the delight of females in every situation in life; from the peeress at the head of society to the laundress at the tail of it; from the lady who is ushered into some fashionable *Magazin des Modes*, and with bows and smirks conducted through ranges of Mechlin and Brussels, Indian crapes and Cachemire shawls, and satins and silks in the regions of St. James's; to the humble artizan's wife, who, in spite of the fatigue of a hard day's work, on a Saturday night roves through the linen drapers' repositories in High Holborn; examines printed cottons warranted fast colours, and cheapens Gros de Naples at two shillings *per* yard; in order to buy a little finery for a Sunday jaunt to Highbury or Richmond-hill. The love of shopping seems to be an innate sentiment of the female bosom; the delight of spending money; the plea sure of purchasing things which

> Are bought because they may be wanted;
> Wanted because they may be bought;

is a characteristic of the sex all over the world

Very few of them are sensible of the value of money by any other means than those of spending it; they never know the trouble of getting it. They look to their quarterly allowance from their husbands as though it grew spontaneously for their use; and never think or dream of the deficiencies of tenants, of the cessation of remittances, of the stoppage of bankers, or of any of those variety of disappointments which continually occur between the expectation and the purse.

How many matrimonial fracas have been boxed up in the neat pasteboard cases which are hourly transferred from these shops to the toilets of the fair purchasers. How many papas have greeted, with lengthened visage and rising sigh, the profusion of feathers and furs with which some "exquisite" young lady has loaded her footman, with the intention of striking fop's alley with astonishment from her box at the opera. But what are the trifling circumstances of a husband's ruin or a father's heartache, compared with the hope of a new conquest, or the gratification of eclipsing a rival?

On the morning in question, Lady Orville, not being at all inclined for visits, proposed a shopping morning's lounge, and took Emily with her.

The moment that Orville had got rid of Forrester and dismissed Langley, he mounted his horse; and, calling for Hartley, away they galloped, and catching sight of the carriage as it dashed down Regent-street (for at that moment there was situated the grand emporium of female finery), they joined it in time to hand Lady Orville and Emily into the shop; or, as it is now more politely called, a "depôt." There were displayed the productions of France and India, to tempt the English guineas from English pockets. Lady Orville was too well known not to meet with immediate attention; and lounging through the rooms with Emily on her arm, they were obsequiously followed by the stiff-cravatted shopman, who beladyshipped them both to a great extent; and calling for one tempting article after another, displayed all the new importations which had been the result of Mr. H.'s last visit to Paris: while Lord

Orville poured his insidious compliments into Emily's ear, and Hartley rattled away with the Countess.

To enumerate the variety of merchandize which here met the apathetic glances of Lady Orville, whose senses were far too *usé* to be gratified or surprised by any thing of the kind, and the astonished gaze of the less experienced Emily, would require volumes. Cachemires were unfolded, jewel cases opened, porcelain vases and bronzes, and marbles displayed to the admiring eyes of the beholders, and a variety of things were ordered. At length Lady Orville said, " By the bye, my dear Emily, we shall want some costume for the Marchioness of Tourville's fancy ball;" and immediately led the way to the dress-room, telling the attendant that the gentlemen must be admitted. Lady Orville's wishes were paramount with the civil shopkeepers.

Doors, which had hitherto been concealed by the shelves which contained a variety of articles in front of them, were immediately thrown open, and the party entered a long room, in which

were several groups of women at work, under various superintendants.

Almost the whole of these little sempstresses were young women, and some of them exceedingly pretty. The entrance of two such fashionable men as Lord Orville and Frank Hartley, was the signal for a number of little espiégleries, and a hundred significant glances exchanged between each other, "*a l'insu*," as the French say, of their task-mistresses.

That some of these glances were directed towards the gentlemen themselves, we do not deny; nor did the presence of Lady Orville and Emily prevent their being returned in kind; or impede a few whispered compliments, as they took up and admired the various articles which were displayed. These little whispers were received with affected blushes, and a giggle of delight, which was communicated to their companions, by one of the aforesaid significant glances from the distinguished fair one.

While Emily was trying on a turban, Lord Orville discerned, for the first time, a young female, at some distance from her companions,

anxiously and industriously engaged upon some tambour work. This young person, unlike the rest, had continued to ply her needle without taking any apparent notice of the party. She was dressed in deep, though humble, mourning; and contrived so to conceal her face by the attitude in which she worked, and by a profusion of fine black hair, that Orville could not, with all his manœuvering, discover whether she was handsome or ugly.

Withdrawing Hartley from a flirtation with two or three young women, who seemed but too ready to give both him and his friend encouragement, by the forwardness of their manners, he directed his attention to this newly discovered beauty, by saying: "Egad, Hartley, we have missed the finest woman in the room, after all, if we may judge by her figure."

Hartley turned his eyes in the direction pointed out by Orville, and saw a person, rather above the middle height, bending over a tambour frame. She still continued in that position, in which it was impossible to see her face; but her figure seemed to be of exquisite

proportions. Her head nearly rested on the frame, so that her work was nearly covered with a profusion of large glossy ringlets. Two delicate hands were also perceptible, plying the tambour needle with apparently unwearied industry; while a foot, corresponding in proportion and beauty with the hands, peeped from beneath the black crape dress in which she was so completely enveloped, that nothing but the white throat was visible above it.

"What an attitude and figure for a picture of Penelope," exclaimed Orville, in an under tone to Hartley; "we must see her nearer."

With this intention, and apparently with the view of inspecting her work, they sauntered towards the embroidress, who sat at some distance from her fellow workwomen, as though she disliked a nearer neighbourhood. Startled at their approach, which was not unobserved by the object of their attention; the only notice she seemed to take of it, was by bending her head closer over her frame, and striving still more to screen her countenance from observation. As they approached, this determination

at concealment became so evident as to rouse their curiosity, but although they had now come quite close to her, she did not raise her head.

They perceived that her hands trembled, and that she hardly knew where she placed the needle; and as Hartley, at length, leaned quite over her work, he heard her breathe so hard and audibly, that every respiration seemed almost a sob. At this instant, unable any longer to conceal her countenance, or restrain her agitation, the needle dropped from her trembling hand, she sunk back in her chair, her black hair fell from her face, and discovered the pale but still beautiful features of Caroline Dormer.

The effect of this apparition upon Hartley was instantaneous. The blood rushed into his face, then receded to his heart, leaving him almost as pale as Caroline. His cruel neglect flashed at once upon his memory; and it was only owing to Orville's presence of mind, who had perceived the recognition; that he did not betray his agitation, and exhibit a scene which might have involved himself in ridicule, and excited unworthy suspicions of Caroline.

As it was, the slight commotion attracted the attention of one of the task mistresses; to whom Orville said, that their sudden approach had alarmed the young lady; and, apologizing for the circumstance, requested a glass of water, to recover her. The water was soon brought, accompanied by a smart reprimand from the termigant; and Orville led Hartley away, while the young ladies laughed at the affected squeamishness of Miss Dormer.

Lady Orville and Emily were, fortunately, still intent on the important circumstance of choosing their dresses for the fancy ball.

"I see," said Orville, "that she is an old acquaintance. She is a beautiful girl, and you seem to be a happy man Hartley."

"I would give worlds to speak to her," replied Hartley, "but I dare not."

"Worlds, nonsense. Worlds, to speak to a milliner! If it be really as you say, that you do not know how to obtain an interview, and wish it; why not go up and admire her work, and during the conversation, name some time and place? rely upon it it will be attended to."

"Orville, you don't know her. How she came to be in such a situation as this, I am at a loss to conceive."

"Nay, your curiosity need not long remain ungratified. I see I must still be your tutor, though I was in hopes by this time you might go alone." Then, raising his voice, "by the bye," said he, "Hartley, I have not given you that address I promised you. I will give it you now," and tearing a leaf from his pocket book, he apparently wrote an address. Then, shewing the paper, instead of an address, Hartley read the words, "I must see you; meet me this evening at ——— at eight; pray do not fail." "Is that right?" and he folded it up in as small a compass as possible, and gave it to Hartley. Then, walking up again in the direction of Caroline's place, he engaged the women who were nearest to her in conversation. During this period Hartley approached Caroline, as though with the intention of merely asking if she had recovered from her fright, and dropped the paper upon the work before her. A blush overspread her features, a slight

sensation of repugnance appeared to agitate her frame; then, seizing the paper, and hastily hiding it in her bosom, that universal pocket of a woman, she cast one glance of mingled tenderness and reproach at Hartley, and resumed her work; though with such trembling hands, that there is little doubt but every stitch was obliged to be unpicked, and that the day in question proved a "*dies non*," as far as it regarded Caroline's labour in the service of the Regent-street emporium.

By this time Lady Orville had expended her whole stock of curiosity, and became herself tired of tiring the patience of her shopkeeping attendants; this was the only circumstance that ever induced her to relieve them from the trouble she gave them. In her eyes, such people were made for no other purposes than to wait upon the pleasures, and to serve the caprices, of the great; and the most elaborate trouble she could possibly occasion them, was, in her mind, more than repaid, by a condescending nod of "good morning," as she resumed her vis-a-vis, and drove away to the park.

As for Hartley, he had been startled into himself again by the unexpected sight of Caroline. A few months of London dissipation, under the auspices of such a man as Orville, had deadened, though it might have repressed, those generous feelings of youth, which were the principal characteristics of his heart, when we first saw him stealing from his noisy companions to the garden of the poor curate at Oxford.

For the first few weeks, thoughts of Caroline were perpetually in his mind, and he wrote two or three letters, filled with protestations of the same warmth of affection as that which had characterised his conversation at their parting interview. During this short period the post time that brought him a letter from her was anxiously looked for, and considered the brightest hour of the day. A series, however, of dissipated pleasures; a constant succession of female society; two or three liaisons, partly platonic and partly of a different character; soon relaxed the nerves of his attachment (if we may use the expression) to Caroline, as well as the

purity of his mind; and his own neglect of their correspondence, soon made the appearance of her letters a reproach, rather than a pleasure to him. He suffered them to lay unopened for a day on his dressing-table; and we are ashamed to say, that they at length remained unanswered, if not unperused. There is nothing so subversive of that generous and virtuous attachment which the youthful heart feels towards a woman as the kind of life into which Lord Orville introduced Hartley. It was not, like that of Lascelles, sufficiently *broad* to make his heart turn with disgust from the vice, or laxity of morals, which it exhibited; but was so disguised with the affectation of delicacy, or rather with that substitution of elegance which so often passes for delicacy, that there was every thing to allure, and nothing to disgust. There was sufficient refinement to banish all idea of that *grossierté* which would have driven Hartley at once from the pursuit of pleasure that partook of this character; and so much excitement of the passions, kept up by the aid of music and conversation, that half the minds in the world

would have denominated these pursuits merely elegant enjoyments, which were in fact the mere sensual indulgence of vicious propensities.

In the midst of such a career as this, no wonder that Caroline was forgotten; or, if some recollections of her intruded at dressing time, or in the first waking moments of the morning; no wonder that they were soon banished by those thick coming engagements which now filled the visiting-book of Hartley.

Although, however, his heart might not be influenced by the mere remembrance of all that had passed between them, it could not withstand her personal appearance. The unexpected apparition in the work-room had recalled him to all that he had so long forgotten; the study of the old curate—the little garden behind the parsonage—the arbour in the green walk—all rushed at once into his memory, and called up the long buried, though not yet dead, affections of his heart, "like spirits from the vasty deep;" and they were accompanied with many a bitter pang for the undeserved neglect with which he had treated Caroline. Her pale

face too, and dim eye, so unlike the buoyant health in which he had left her, did not fail to add to the impression he had received.

As they rode to the park, Hartley was two or three times on the point of making Lord Orville the confidant of his early affection; but Orville, who ridiculed the idea of a serious attachment for a milliner, rallied him so unmercifully on his wan countenance, and on the evident effect which the unexpected meeting had produced, that Hartley shrunk instinctively from making the communication; while his heart turned sick at the libertine allusions, and the laughing congratulations, with which Orville spoke of the "sentimental sempstress," and anticipated the result of Hartley's expected interview.

In agreeing to the solicitation for a meeting, Hartley, in spite of his new mode of life, had not harboured a thought derogatory to the honour of Caroline. The revival of all his old feelings of affection, mingled with a strong curiosity to know how she could come into such a situation, were the principal incentives to the wish; no evil intention, no insidious motive, as

yet mingled with his intentions or his ideas; nor could the raillery of Orville induce him to think more lightly of her, because he found her in such a situation as that in which he had discovered her.

As for Caroline, she could not recover from the effects of this first meeting with Hartley. Although it was natural that she should expect to meet him in London; and thought that her heart was prepared to encounter him with the indifference which his neglect of her had deserved; yet she had calculated wrongly on her strength; and, under such circumstances, what woman could calculate rightly? There was no occasion for a sight of Hartley to recall all the scenes of their former intimacy to *her* recollection; the study, the garden, the arbour, were all too strongly impressed upon *her* memory to require any adventitious aid to recall them. A woman's heart does not so easily forget these things as that of a man. Such feelings are all in all to a woman; while to a man they are in general the mere episodes to greater, though not sweeter excitement. To a man, they are

reliefs from the severer labours, the more important duties, or rather pursuits of life; to a woman, they are life itself. Caroline could scarcely breathe from agitation when she placed Hartley's note in her bosom; yet, though her heart beat against it most tumultuously, she could not but acknowledge that it beat less unhappily. She hurried away, the first opportunity that her task allowed her; and, luckily the pencil, and the hurried manner with which it had been written, did not permit her to discover that it was not Hartley's own hand-writing.

At first, the idea of again seeing him to whom she had devoted her earliest and warmest affection, in mutual confidence; and the hope that the interview might produce some explanation of Hartley's neglect that would prove it not to have been culpable; gave to Caroline the only feeling of pleasure her poor heart had experienced for months. But these hopes, faint as they were, were soon blighted at the recollection, that, since their parting, circumstances had rendered the distance that existed between their situation still greater than it was before. She was then,

as now, the daughter of a gentleman, though a poor one; but she was then living under his roof, respectably if not splendidly; and mixing in the society of that caste in which she had been born: now, she was, in her own eyes, deemed a menial; earning her daily bread, the companion of beings of an inferior order, whose vulgarity and difference of manners forced themselves unpleasantly, even on the patient and forbearing mind of Caroline.

If Hartley's family would have shrunk from the thoughts of uniting their son with the daughter of a poor clergyman; with how much more indignation would they discard the idea of receiving a hired sempstress as his wife—one, who laboured for a weekly pittance on that finery which they were born to wear.

Poor Caroline felt all this, and her heart swelled with grief almost to bursting. Though reason told her there could be no hope; and that it was better she should continue to think Hartley cruel and neglectful, than have her tender feelings again roused by being undeceived in a supposition which at least called her pride in to

her support, if it did not conquer her feelings of affection; yet, she still clung to the idea of proving him not to be unworthy of the love with which he had inspired her; and with this hope she at length determined upon granting the solicited interview—and, when has woman determined otherwise, than to act upon the strong impulses of the heart, rather than upon the less vivid arguments of reason.

CHAPTER IV.

THE INTERVIEW.

They met—as lovers meet—with faultering tongues—
With glistening eyes—and trembling hands—and lips
That quivered with the greeting that they gave;—
He half shame—half rapture—she but half reproach—
For pleasure killed her anger. BROOKS.

RATED, as we have been, by the fastidiousness of those critics who think a page sullied by naming the possibility of a vice; and, who seem to suppose no book fit to be read that is not a mere history of the virtues of mankind; we confess ourselves rather at a loss, when the true system o that human nature which it is our attempt to delineate, will force into our scenes those vices, which form, alas! the aggregate of the human drama.

Had it been our lot to have been born in some Utopia, from which vice had been excluded; in which human passions led alone to the accomplishment of virtuous ends; our pages might have been mere transcripts of the purity of human nature; but in any true picture of a society, constituted as ours is, vice must mingle in the dance of the passions, and become in its turn a prominent feature in the scene. It is the fault of the nature that is to be delineated, and not of the delineator; we write things as they are, and not things as they ought to be, and as we would wish they should be.

Yet, perhaps our readers, nay even these fastidious critics themselves, would find any delineation of society but a dull piece of business, were all the women who constitute it Pamelas, and all the men Sir Charles Grandisons. A history of society must be a melange; a general mixture of virtues and vices, by turns predominant, according to the temptations and impulses by which the actions of men are guided. There are few "faultless monsters" in the world; and they are less likely to be found in that class of society

where there is so much to tempt the will, and to excite the passions, as that which we are attempting to delineate. We scarcely know why we have been led into this kind of apologetic digression; for a novelist has no right to make an apology when merely describing people and passions that exist, and things that are; but as our thoughts were fixed upon Caroline Dormer, and on the dangerous position in which circumstances had placed her, they were naturally led to diverge for a moment to a class of females who are lost by the flattery of the one sex, and by the heartlessness of the other. For, alas! how many, who have been led for a moment astray by the former, would have redeemed their own good opinion and that of others, had it not been for the perdition that is entailed upon them by the contempt and reproaches of the latter. We question much, whether more women have not been lost by the conduct of their own sex than by that of ours; and whether the cruel and heartless fastidiousness of those females who are out of the reach of temptation from circumstances, or remain untempted

from their inability to tempt, has not more to answer for, in the loss of female reputation, and in that degradation of female character which society so frequently exhibits, than all those arts of men to which they are generally attributed.

It excites our indignation to see the cold scorn with which a fallen woman is spoken of, and the heartless pleasure, with which her errors are blazoned; by those, who, for the credit of their sex, should conceal them; and who, for the honour of human nature, should attempt to redeem the victims from their consequences.

Yet, how is this lapse of virtue overlooked, where the frail one can contribute to the eclat or the entertainment of a party. Nay, with what avidity have we seen women, whose laxity of morals has been as notorious as noon-day, courted by the first and the most fastidious in society, merely from the circumstance of their musical acquirement.

Look at the foreigners, who grace, or rather disgrace, the saloons of so many of our fashionable mansions; are their liaisons unknown? is the general tenour of their lives a secret? is not

the profligacy of their conduct as notorious as though it had been *affichéed* with the government proclamations at the Horse Guards?

Yet, look at them, received and treated as the stars of a brilliant assembly. See the mothers and daughters of our aristocracy crowding round the harps and pianos, to hear these wantons sing, and soliciting presentations, and engaging them for their next concert, to seat them at the same table with the most virtuous and exalted of the land; while there is scarcely a husband, or brother, that is not planning, by every means in his power, to obtain an introduction of a different nature. Does the atmosphere of Paris, or the blue skies of Italy, render vice less vicious, or its examples less contagious? does the being a foreigner give the privilege of profligacy? or, does the shameless publicity with which a career of licentiousness is pursued, take from its moral turpitude? In our opinion, this very publicity is an aggravation of the offence. Let vice hide its head in those recesses of society where it will not call a blush into the face of the virtuous. Let it shrink into those places where its example

can do no harm; let it show its own sense of its own hideousness by its fears of publicity; and it is not then calculated to do the same mischief as when it is seen to show its face with impunity, and stands, unblushing and unshrinking, side by side with virtue, to show the world how little difference there is, between the consideration paid to one and to the other.

These, too, are generally women acquiring ample means of independence from the immense encouragement which is given to their talent; and who have therefore no other apology for their profligacy than their depraved inclinations. Amongst these, as in all other classes, there are certainly exceptions; and one splendid one. If we may credit her own confession, as well as public rumour, she has been tempted by almost every crowned head in Europe; and is in possession of presents from most of them, without a blot having been cast upon the escutcheon of her fair fame.

We think we see the smile of contempt which curls upon the lips of the exquisite and the exclusive, as they recollect that all this is called

forth by such a contemptible personage as a little milliner; by one of those, who, by a certain class, are considered to be endowed with beauty for no other purpose than to add to their own unworthy conquests and pleasures.

Caroline Dormer was, however, far superior to the situation in which we last saw her; her education had fitted her for other and better things, and her mind had not been reduced with her circumstances. She had loved Hartley with all the energy and devotedness of which her young heart was capable. She had wept with agony over his undeserved neglect; but she had suffered in silence. She had passively permitted the march of circumstances, which had reduced her to her present situation, without a struggle to avoid it. Hopeless of him, she had become hopeless of every thing else; life had become distasteful, and her heart sickened under the burthen of her disappointment. Pleasure, pain, labour, and ease, were alike indifferent; or rather every other feeling and idea were absorbed in that one great sensation which occupied every thought and feeling of her soul.

Whatever might be her occupation, Hartley, his attachment and his neglect, were the subjects of her meditations and regrets. His figure haunted her in her sleep; and her waking dreams always pictured him to her imagination, and recalled his broken vows and violated promises to her recollection.

Her mind, thus occupied by his image; no wonder at the agitation she experienced at the sight of him, nor of that which his brief note produced. At first, she determined to avoid him; she had, during her short residence in London, learned enough to know the light in which some one or two of her companions were looked upon by men their superiors in rank; and though she did not place herself upon a level with these light minded and vain creatures; yet she dreaded Hartley's partaking of the same sentiments as the men with whom he associated. She saw how different the world was in reality to that which they had both pictured it in their earliest days; yet was there still that tinge of romance in her disposition, which, almost unknown to herself, whispered a hope that the

difference of their rank might not prove an insuperable barrier to their union. She felt her superiority to her companions, and therefore never sunk herself to a level with them in her own opinion, and she trusted this superiority would be acknowledged by others as well as by herself; by her companions themselves it was felt, but only to generate their envy, and to tempt their vulgar ridicule.

Caroline had imagined that she had resigned herself entirely to her fate, and that she had made up her mind to the complete loss of Hartley; his appearance, however, soon convinced her to the contrary; and that tinge of the romantic in her disposition, in spite of her better reason, soon induced her to determine upon granting the desired interview. This determination, however, was not adopted without a great deal of hesitation; though her heart throbbed with affection for Hartley, it was not free from indignation at his neglect; and though her feelings in his favour hurried her into hopes that this might be satisfactorily explained, yet her better judgment whispered that she had

better remain in her present misery than run the risk of having it removed by temporary happiness, and renewed by future disappointments. It is scarcely necessary to say, that womanhood got the better of reason; for, where there is real affection in the case, when was it ever otherwise? As the hour approached, her agitation increased; and at the last moment she was on the point of relinquishing her determination, when all their former meetings rushing at once upon her memory, she threw on her shawl, and hurried to the place of appointment.

Hartley was already there; so that she had neither the bitterness of that moment of anxious suspense, which a want of implicit punctuality in such appointments occasions; nor, the opportunity which such a moment might have afforded, for reflection, and for a change in her resolution. Her agitation prevented her meeting the animated greeting of Hartley with any thing but a faint smile. He drew her arm silently within his, and, avoiding the crowd that was passing through that part of the Park where they had met; they sauntered into the more solitary walks,

to impart to each other all that had passed since they had met in the garden of the good curate at Oxford.

Caroline's simple story was soon told; she had no succession of passions to tinge the intervening months with variety; her whole soul had been occupied by her love for Hartley, and her grief at his desertion, and for the death of her father.

The poor curate had been snatched suddenly from the world while in the performance of his clerical duties; and Caroline found herself left alone, utterly unprovided for, with all the ideas and feelings of a gentlewoman, without the slightest means for their support. Her father's successor desired possession of the house as soon as decency permitted him to turn its mourning occupant out; for church preferment is as eagerly and rapaciously grasped by the teachers of meekness and christianity, as that of a less sacred nature by less sacred characters; and Caroline found herself obliged to seek an asylum in the house of a humble and poor relative in London.

Too proud, as well as too just, to owe her maintenance to those who could ill afford to support the expence; the moment of her arrival, she urged her relative to look out in every direction for some means by which she might prevent her being a burthen to any one. Caroline was well educated, and accomplished beyond what might have been expected from the limited income of her father. Her accomplishments had been derived from her mother, who had been a very superior woman; and who had imparted all to her daughter that she had derived from a very excellent education. It was her wish, therefore, to turn these talents to account, and to engage herself as governess in some seminary, or family. Unhappily, however, the little interest her relative possessed, did not lie in the direction by which this desirable end could be accomplished; and the want of some high recommendation, rendered her applications after advertised situations abortive.

Tired of maintaining her, this person, having at length heard of a vacancy in the establishment in Regent-street; and knowing

Caroline's ingenuity and taste in embroidery; she urged her acceptance of it with so much pertinacity, that, repugnant as it was to her pride, Caroline became an inmate and a sempstress in this emporium of female finery.

These artless annals of her life were soon recapitulated by Caroline to her lover, with a truth and ingenuousness, which Hartley dared not imitate in his recital to her. How different, indeed, had been his life! what a detail of infidelities to his vows! what an exhibition of heartless inconstancy! how many scenes bordering upon libertinism must he not have represented, had he given any true narrative of the life he had led since their last meeting, when he had declared that he loved her, and only her; and that he should love her, and only her, for ever.

The sight of Caroline; the renewal of their intercourse; the artless recital of her melancholy adventures; recalled, however, all his former love; while the sufferings she had undergone; the patient resignation with which his neglect of her had been borne; gave an additional tenderness to all his feelings, that ren-

dered the renewal of this intimacy delightful. Hours flew on, while they were thus indulging in recollections of their life at Oxford; and it was not till the chimes sounded the three quarters past ten, that Caroline recalled to mind the regulation which compelled her to return to Regent-street by eleven. With this thought, too, came that of the imprudence of remaining so late, and alone, with Hartley; and what he himself might think of such an imprudence, formed not the least part of her distress.

As she detailed this to him, Hartley silently cursed Regent-street, the tambour-frame, and the Horse-guards, that so impertinently put them in mind of the hour. He had not tasted any pleasure during his career of dissipation that had equalled his conversation, and the renewal of his intercourse, with Caroline. There was a freshness about his feelings; a renovation of youth in their enjoyment; a *nature* about the delight he had experienced, so different from the "*fade*" pleasures, derived from the artificial women with whom he had lately associated, that, in spite of her humble situation, forced a com-

parison on his mind not at all unfavorable to Caroline. During their short and hurried return to Regent-street, she promised to meet him again; though she now persisted in her determination to bring a companion in whom she could confide: nor could all Hartley's entreaties to the contrary, make her change this resolution. The moment, therefore, that Caroline should have determined on this companion, she was to inform Hartley by letter, when he was to make his own appointment for another interview.

With this agreement they parted: Caroline to return to her solitary bed, with the recollections of the evening for her only companions; and to think on all that her lover had said in extenuation of his late conduct, and on all the promises, which his manner, rather than his words, had given her for the future:—Hartley, to hurry through a late dinner in his dressing-room, and to pursue his nightly career of splendid parties, which left little room for recollections of Caroline, till his carriage set him down in the Albany, where he had now taken up his residence, exhausted by excitement and fatigue.

Here, however, the question of his intentions with regard to Caroline forced itself upon his mind; but he fell asleep before he could contrive to answer it satisfactorily.

CHAPTER V.

RENCONTRES.

Sir Harry. Why, you seem playing at cross purposes.

Lord W. He who crosses my purpose, shall find it no play; that I 'll assure him.

FALSE WEDDING.

ON quitting Lord Orville, Langley flew home to delight his wife with the news of his successful application; for successful in the fullest meaning of the word did his sanguine mind consider it. To his surprise, however, he learned that Mrs. Langley was not within; a circumstance which the more surprized him, since, as the concealment of their marriage did not permit him to accompany her, she very seldom left their humble domicile, excepting in the evening

with her child. Burthened with his good news, Langley was half angry that his wife was not at home to share it with him; but giving way to his natural inclination for day dreams, he sauntered towards the Park, to enjoy, in imagination, all the anticipated results of the kind promises of Lord Orville; promises which we have seen were very likely to be forgotten, and certain to be broken, by that honourable Peer.

In the mean time, his wife, who had very little dependence upon the performance of her husband's promise of an application; and almost as little upon the result of it, even were it made; had quitted home, with the determination of seeking out the maternal uncle before alluded to. A morning paper had announced his arrival in town, and his domicile at the house of a titled relation; and it was towards this mansion that Mrs. Langley directed her steps.

Certain that this attempt would never receive the sanction of her husband, who, from her uncle's conduct to her mother at her marriage, had set him down as an unfeeling tyrant; she had taken advantage of his absence, which generally lasted

the whole morning, to make this attempt without his knowledge.

During her walk, she summoned all the recollections of her mother's description of the early affection of her brother, to give her courage to persevere in the attempt; and arranged, as well as she could, her short story in her mind so as to produce the best effect. Her heart beat quickly as she approached the door, but sunk, almost to sickening, as she lifted the knocker. The recollection, however, of the duty she had to perform, the hope of the benefit which might result to her husband and child, and the knowledge that it was her nearest relation that she was seeking, gave her courage, and the ponderous knocker dropped from her hand in one of those equivocal raps, which may be interpreted either double or single, according to circumstances. The door flew open in a second in the hands of the fat porter, while three or four lacquies were on the alert to escort any "admitted" visitor to the morning saloon. On the appearance, however, of one, not on the list, they lounged back to their newspapers, or their fire-

side gossip, which the knock at the door for a moment had interrupted. The porter's jolly countenance at once lost its good-natured expression on the sight of a pelisse and bonnet rather faded, and a lady who knocked at the door for herself. To her faultering question, which she could scarcely breathe audibly from her pale lips, if the object of her visit was within; was returned a monotonous "not at home," pronounced in a tone which made it appear as though the surly porter uttered it mechanically.

To those who have made a great exertion to bring their mind to solicit an interview of importance, and who have looked forward to the result of it as forming an epocha in their lives; who have accomplished the courage necessary for the operation, through many hours of pain and indecision; the mortification arising from this hacknied refusal to be seen, will be easily felt; rendered more keen too by the notion that one has, of its not being true.

Mrs. Langley looked wistfully in the face of the porter, as she faintly requested to know "if he was sure he was right?"

" Not at home," again reiterated the porter. Mrs. Langley tottered down the steps, and the door closed with a sound that seemed to shut out from her heart all future hope; such an effect have even trifling circumstances, when the heart has been wrought up to a certain pitch of misery and excitement. She felt that the difficulty which this " Not at home " barrier placed in the way of gaining an interview with her uncle, was really as formidable as though he had been shut up in some impracticable fortress; and she dreaded that a letter could never produce the desired effect.

Determined, however, to persevere, and to leave nothing neglected on her part to redeem the fortunes of her husband; she set this down merely as a single disappointment, and her spirits were reviving, when she perceived herself the object of attention to a gentleman in a very elegant cabriolet, which was proceeding at a pace a very little quicker than her own, close to the pavement.

Blushing at the observation she had attracted she drew her veil close over her face, and turned

down another street; in the hope of avoiding a gaze which, even in the short moment that she had seen it, she could not but perceive was intently fixed upon herself.

It was in vain, however, that she turned down street after street, the eternal cabriolet seemed to be every where, and to cross her at every movement; nor could she fail, now and then, to meet the glance of the driver, who distressed her by the freedom of his evident admiration. Perceiving that he was determined to follow her, and dreading lest he might discover her residence; in attempting to mislead him she bewildered herself, and, becoming confused, found herself unexpectedly at the entrance to the Park, when she imagined herself far distant from it. The Park, however, presented a refuge from what she now began to deem actual persecution, and she entered it at Harrington gate. To her surprise, however, the carriage also passed into the Park, thus designating the elevated rank of the driver.

As she crossed the avenues, he jumped out of his cabriolet and followed her on foot. Twice

he attempted to address her, and twice was he repressed, with a dignity which awed even his assurance into respect. A nearer view of the face which had attracted him at a distance; and the novelty of the intrinsic modesty with which she repelled his attempt to address her, seemed only to add strength to his determination to discover who she was; but, fearing her resolution never to take the direction of her own residence while he continued his pursuit, he became angry with himself that he had not relinquished the task of the discovery to his servant whom he had left in charge of his cabriolet; and, fearing to lose all chance of knowing where his incognita lived, he was looking anxiously out for some acquaintance, to whom he might depute this honourable office.

In the mean time, however, he did not relax in his endeavours to change her determination; till, roused at last into an exhibition of indignation, she exclaimed—

"Sir, your perseverance becomes insulting."

"Let that perseverance plead for me," retorted her indefatigable persecutor.

Finding all attempts to get rid of his intrusion vain, she suddenly stopped, and assuming as much dignity as her agitation would permit, she said calmly—

"Tell me, Sir, is there any thing in my appearance; was there any thing in my manners, to authorize this intrusion? or to induce you thus to follow me, when you perceive your attentions to be offensive?"

"So far from it," replied the unabashed intruder, "it was the perfect modesty of your demeanour, added to an appearance of grief, which I thought perhaps I might alleviate, that attracted my notice."

"You appear, Sir," said Mrs. Langley, still retaining her composure, "to be a gentleman; and yet own, that the very circumstances, which ought to have protected me from your addresses, are the very reasons you allege for insulting me. Let that modesty you pretend to admire, Sir, be the best assurance of the uselessness of solicitation; and let me pass on. I entreat—nay, Sir, I insist on the free liberty of passing unfollowed and without molestation;" and, see-

ing him still determined to persevere, she added, "otherwise you will compel me to appeal to the first stranger I meet, for protection against your insults."

Mrs. Langley's agitation had encreased during this appeal; and the last words were uttered in so loud a tone of voice, that the words "insult," and "protection," awoke Langley from the day-dream which he was indulging on one of the benches near the spot on which this conversation had taken place.

Too short-sighted to distinguish the parties by whom his attention had been attracted; he turned towards the spot, exclaiming, "Eh, who calls for protection?"

Langley was recognized in a moment by both parties; and Mrs. Langley, dreading a thousand disagreeable circumstances in the event of the recognition being mutual, turned short round, and walked swiftly away in an opposite direction.

"Protection! Nonsense! Langley," exclaimed Orville, for he it was who had thus persecuted Mrs. Langley. "You have spoiled the prettiest

tête-a-tête in the world, and have actually frightened away the prettiest woman I have seen these six months."

"I spoil a tête-a-tête," stammered Langley, who saw his hopes fading in the idea of offending Lord Orville.

"Yes, and the only reparation you can make me, is to undo the mischief you have occasioned, by following that little woman in the blue pelisse and cottage bonnet, and discovering her residence."

"I—my—Lord; I am so short-sighted."

"Not a word, or you will miss her—and I would not lose her for a thousand. Nay fly, my dear Langley, and when you bring me the intelligence of her residence, I shall have news for you from his Grace of ——." And so saying, without waiting for a reply, Lord Orville jumped into his cabriolet, while Langley, confused, and scarcely knowing what he was doing, mechanically walked on in the direction pointed out by Orville.

"What can he take me for," thought Langley, almost aloud, as an indignant feeling at

the unworthiness of his employment arose in his mind. "I follow a woman for him! A good appointment may be a very good thing, but I should not enjoy the best place in the world if I had to reflect on having performed one dirty action to procure it." Such were the reflections which arose in his mind; yet still he walked on, in the direction which Mrs. Langley had taken, though his infirmity did not permit him to distinguish the object of his pursuit. He saw he might offend Lord Orville, and crush the hopes upon which he had been building. He did not like thus to kick his basket of eggs into the street at once, and mar the fortune he had been enjoying in anticipation; neither did he like the positive manner, in which he had been dispatched on his unworthy errand by Lord Orville, who seemed to expect that his patronage was to be purchased by any services which he might require, from those who enjoyed it. Yet how to extricate himself from this dilemma? At this moment he was joined by Mr. Versatile Tadpole.

Tadpole was a young man of obscure birth,

with means sufficient to enable him to live without the drudgery of office or business. His sole ambition in life was to be thought intimate with persons of fashion. He was the veriest lord-hunter in the creation; and would do any thing, however mean or contemptible, to curry favour with a Countess, or to secure a nod at the Opera from a Peer. By these means, he contrived to linger in the outskirts of fashionable society; tolerated, in some houses from the use they made of him, and, getting into others, under the protecting wing of some old College acquaintance, or of some man of fashion who had condescended to make him his jackal. He knew the whole peerage by sight; could discover the coronet on a carriage in the densest fog in November; had made himself acquainted with the topographical situation of every person's opera box, and would have made the best walking Court Guide in the world; since, if he did not claim acquaintance with the inmates, he knew the knocker and brass plate on the door of every fashionable mansion in town.

In this pursuit, Tadpole had cut his connec-

tion with the class of society in which he was born; without having been able to graft himself upon that to which he aspired; so that he was laughed at by the sensible persons of the one, and despised by nearly the whole of the other; who seldom condescended to notice him, unless it was to borrow his money, or send him on an errand. Indeed, Tadpole might not unaptly have been designated the "errand boy" of fashion. He had been uniformly black-balled at every club in London in which he could prevail upon any proposer and seconder to inscribe his name among the candidates; but yet he persisted in his pursuit, and the labour of a whole morning's walk or ride in the Park, was amply repaid by a nod from any one of the heads in the window at White's, or a "How d' ye do, Tadpole?" from the supercilious voice of some galloping exquisite in the Park.

Langley's loss of fortune had at first lowered him considerably in the eyes of Mr. Tadpole; but, when he saw him still on the same familiar terms with his former associates, and still read his name in the morning papers among the fashion-

ables who attended such and such an assembly, his whole importance was restored.

Langley, who knew Tadpole's character and failings, looked upon the present rencontre as a most fortunate circumstance. Here was a way to escape from a disagreeable office, and yet run no risk of offending his patron. Telling Tadpole, therefore, the story — pointing out the obligation Lord Orville would be under to him —complaining of his own want of vision, as incapacitating himself, for performing the service; he secured in a moment a most willing proxy; to whom the idea of obliging a lord would have rendered a much more degrading task palatable.

"But shall I convey the intelligence myself to Orville House?" asked Tadpole, eagerly.

"Certainly," replied Langley.

"You won't forestall me?"

"No, no! but you will certainly miss her," said Langley.

"Blue pelisse and cottage bonnet, you say?"

"Yes, yes!" and away flew Tadpole in the direction Mrs. Langley had taken; while Lang-

ley, intending the infirmity of his sight to form an apology to Orville; like many others, blinded himself into a species of consolation at doing his dirty work by deputy.

CHAPTER VI.

LOVERS.

Why, thank her then, not weep, or moan;
Let others guard their careless heart,
And praise the day that thus made known
The faithless hold on woman's art.

HARRINGTON.

SCARCELY any situation can be imagined more painful than that of poor Forrester. Loving Emily with his whole soul, conscious that none around her appreciated her value, nor bore her the same degree of real affection as himself; he was yet condemned to see her perpetually subject to the attention of others, and to follow her from party to party, without being able to gain one confidential communication. It was in vain that he watched for an opportunity; if chance presented one, it was sure to be dis-

appointed by some intrusion on the part of one or the other of the Orville family.

He saw too, with fear, the change in her habits — mourned over the dissipation of the life she led — and dreaded lest the effect of the examples by which she was surrounded, should influence her future existence. Knowing, as he had done, the excellence of her heart and principles, and sensible of the foundation upon which those principles were built, he felt secure that they could never be eradicated. Yet he trembled to think of the consequences of such a perpetual round of gaiety upon a heart and mind so young; he dreaded its unfitting her for a more domestic life, and that the excitement under which she now lived might by long continuance become necessary to her existence.

It was impossible, however, for Forrester to go on long without perceiving the change in Emily's manner towards himself. At first, he attributed it to the natural objection that every woman of delicacy feels towards making the sentiments or attentions of any man public; but at length her coldness, and the pleasure she

seemed to enjoy in escaping from his attentions to those of Lord Orville, or, indeed, to those of any other of the gay beings, by whom she was now perpetually surrounded, almost confirmed his worst fears. Open, too, as Orville House was to him at all hours, he began to think it strange, that she herself did not make some opportunity for him to see her alone; and, at length, the unpleasant truth forced itself upon his observation, that, on the contrary, she herself sedulously avoided any thing like confidential commmunication. This certainty was a sad blow to poor Forrester; it deprived him of his last remaining hope; he saw all the prospects he had formed fade before him; and, what rendered it worse, he saw no hope that this destruction of his happiness would ensure that of Emily. Such was the nature of his love, that, could he have seen any reasonable prospect of her happiness being increased by the change, he would have tried to support his disappointment with fortitude. As it was, he gave himself up to despair, on her account as well as his own.

It was in vain he called in the aid of philo-

sophy—in vain he appealed to reason—in vain exerted all his common sense; all their powers faded before his intense feeling; and Forrester became as great a victim to disappointed love, as though he had not possessed a grain of philosophy, common sense, or reason.

It was in vain he argued, that, if she was so changed, he ought rather to rejoice, instead of lament that she was not to be his wife; he found love and nature stronger than all arguments. He could not follow the advice of the old English poet in the "Nugæ Antiquæ," given under similar circumstances:

"Give o'er thy plaint, the danger 's o'er;
She might have poisoned all thy life;
Such wayward mind had bred thee more
Of sorrow had she prov'd thy wife:
Leave her to meet all hapless meed,
And bless thyself that thou art freed."

Forrester would have sucked in the poison of matrimony—have endured all the sorrow of making Emily his wife; and was more inclined to curse, than to bless the freedom, to which this dereliction from her early attachment gave him.

Once admitting the idea of a change in her

sentiments, it was astonishing how many proofs of the truth of this surmise forced themselves upon his mind. Doubt soon grew into certainty, and he determined to seek an interview; throw all upon the hazard of a last appeal; and, if unsuccessful, caution her against the insidious arts of Orville, and bid her farewell for ever.

An opportunity for this appeal at length presented itself, when it was least expected. Entering the library at Orville House, he perceived Emily alone, evidently in deep thought. Once or twice she appeared agitated by some internal emotion: then, sighing, she exclaimed unconsciously, "I almost wish I were back again in the country!" forgetting every thing but the impulse of the moment. Forrester approached her hastily, and asked:

"Can such a wish emanate from Miss Emily's heart?"

Emily started at the sight of him; looked as though she wished to escape; but, perceiving no hope of avoiding the interview, she merely exclaimed, "Bless me, Mr. Forrester!"

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"*Mr.* Forrester! You were not wont to be so formal! it used to be Forrester—or Edward."

"Yes!" replied Emily. "I remember, Mr Forrester, to have been sufficiently rude to have used your name too familiarly."

"Nay," said Forrester, mournfully, "Miss Hartley never could be rude; and the delicacies of her familiarity rendered its favour so great, that I must ever regret its loss."

"Mr. Forrester chooses to be complimentary," said Emily, rather satirically, and taking up the tone in which she had latterly often spoken of Forrester.

"It is unfortunately not in my power to be so," quietly, replied Forrester: "and I remember the time, when sincerity possessed a greater influence than compliments, over your heart. I have long sought this opportunity of speaking with you alone; but, of late, you have been so surrounded by an idolizing multitude, that there has not been a moment to spare to him, who was once happy enough to consider his society as one of the pleasures of your former life."

"Why, I begin to find," said Emily, "that

my former life, as you call it, was no life at all—that it was a mere dream."

"It is but too true," replied Forrester; "and I am at length awakened to the dreadful certainty that it was indeed some illusion of the brain."

"You are quite metaphorical, Mr. Forrester," coldly observed Emily, who assumed an indifference she was far from feeling, hoping that it might the sooner end an interview which was painful to both.

"Oh Emily, Emily!" exclaimed Forrester, "this coldness, this indifference, destroys me. But I come not to complain—I know my doom—yet hear me—hear me, Emily, if it be only for the last time."

"I am all attention, Mr. Forrester."

"Alas! Miss Hartley—I had much—much to say; and thought that I had summoned sufficient courage, as well as sufficiently tranquillized my feelings, to have given utterance to my sentiments, without discovering the bursting agonies of a disappointed heart."

"Agonies!" exclaimed Emily. "The prudent Mr. Forrester talk of agonies?"

"Aye, and feel them too—more, perhaps, than those who make a superior display of their sentiments," replied Forrester; "but no matter —I am but too sensible of the difference you must find in my plain, and perhaps homely, expressions of affection, when compared with the elegance of those compliments which are now crowding daily upon your ear. I perceive, too, how my plain manners must sink in your estimation, when put in competition with those of a fashionable man—I feel all this—deeply, severely feel it—and deeply do I regret the folly, that led me to hope so humble a being as myself, could ever retain an interest in the heart of one, so capable of attracting to her feet, even the most brilliant of these competitors."

Emily felt more than she dared acknowledge, even to herself; and, in a softened tone, replied, "Indeed, Mr. Forrester, these circumstances exist only in your own imagination."

"No, no," said Forrester, mournfully; "they exist in sad reality. I am quite aware of it—I feel my inferiority—I cannot dress up my sentiments in that glowing language which gives

plausibility to sophistry, and which would render truth irresistible."

"Nay, nay," said Emily, in a still softer voice; "such virtues and good sense as Mr. Forrester possesses, will always ensure the esteem they merit, would he but exert them in a direction, where they could be properly appreciated."

"There is but one direction, Miss Hartley," replied Forrester, "in which I ever wished the very few qualifications I possess to gain an ascendancy—but one object in the world, to whom I can truly and sincerely devote them. That object is lost to me; and all my hopes of happiness are blasted for ever."

"Nay, nay, Mr. Forrester," exclaimed Emily, in a tone almost of tenderness—

"Hold!" interrupted Forrester; "revive not the glimpse of a hope, which I know must be immediately extinguished. I see it in your altered manners—I read it in your frigid look—I understand and feel it, from a thousand circumstances that speak the truth of my surmises. Oh, Emily! when memory paints thee as thou

once wert—kind—obliging—may I say affectionate? When imagination pictures the smile with which you greeted me in the morning; the gentle sigh which the evening witnessed at our parting—when I retrace the circumstances of that evening, when I first dared to whisper in your ear a feeling warmer than that of fraternal love—it is then, Emily, that in these retrospections, I experience sensations nearly allied to frenzy—" and Forrester, betrayed by his feelings, out of his usually calm exterior, actually sobbed with agony.

Emily, overcome by her own feelings, and giving way to a momentary burst of tenderness, exclaimed, "Oh Edward! dear Edward! spare me! spare me!—"

"Edward! dear Edward!" repeated Forrester, with delight; "and do I hear that name again from the lips of Emily? Oh repeat it, and I am your slave for ever."

"Oh Edward!—I know—I feel—I am wrong," said Emily.

"Wrong! impossible. Nothing can be

wrong when Emily's heart and understanding direct her actions."

"Pardon me the torture I have given to a sensible heart—a heart of which I feel myself unworthy; and the happiness of which I can never form—"

"What do I hear? what says my Emily?" exclaimed Forrester.

"In the country," pursued Emily, "my natural disposition was repressed. The world, unhappily for me, has shewn me what I am—our dispositions, Forrester, are dissimilar."

"No, no," interrupted Forrester. "In the country, my Emily was herself: here only, is she the creature of circumstance. Can you remember, in anticipating our future lives, how exactly our sentiments accorded? Do you remember in our studies, how perfectly our opinions coincided? Can you recollect our evening walks, and conversations, and say that our hearts are dissimilar? True, I cannot display a blaze of wit that excites the admiration of my auditors—I have no personal accomplishments to dazzle the beholders, and make my wife the

envy of her neighbours—I cannot dress up my affection in the fastidious terms of modern sentiment; but I can proffer you the unalterable love of a manly heart, that will devote itself to your happiness; and, that happiness accomplished, will be the greatest I can possess."

During this passionate appeal, rendered more forcible by the general quietude of the character of him by whom it was made, Emily had been surprized by the return of so much of her former tenderness for Forrester. Her heart seemed to have wandered back into the track it had so grievously deserted. Former scenes rushed upon her remembrance; former feelings forced themselves upon her mind; and, in a voice, in which she seemed to resign herself to their influence, she exclaimed:

"Oh, Forrester, I know the goodness of your heart; I feel the strength of its affection; I remember well our early life, and remember it with regret, even amidst"—Emily was gradually giving way to her feelings. Forrester seemed to hang upon every word she uttered; her former affections and sentiments were evidently

returning with their full force, and the countenance of Forrester was once more glowing with hope;—when Lord Orville, suddenly entered the apartment, and started with surprize at seeing Emily and Forrester together. The moment Emily saw him, she became confused, she repeated the words "even amidst, even amidst," once or twice, and then, shrinking from Orville's glance, she finished by saying, "Ah, you here, my Lord?"

Forrester started, for so intent was he on Emily's words, that he had not perceived Orville's entrance. His countenance assumed its former expression of despair, and he internally exclaimed, "He here! then I am lost."

"You seem surprized at my presence, Miss Hartley," said Lord Orville advancing towards them. "But, can you wonder, that the attraction which is sufficiently powerful to influence the grave, the wise, the prudent Edward Forrester, should draw within its vortex the weak and volatile, though devoted Orville."

"You honor me too much," replied Forrester, endeavouring to regain some degree of com-

posure, "by including one of such humble pretensions, with an individual, whose sphere of attraction is so extended as your Lordship's."

"Why, Miss Hartley," exclaimed Lord Orville, in a tone of affected surprize, "with what wand have you touched Forrester? I protest, Chesterfield himself could never have drest up a compliment in better style; and, as we generally value things by their scarcity, more than from their intrinsic worth, why, I think I must inscribe a compliment from Forrester as a rarity in my common place book."

"I believe, my Lord," said Emily, trying to rally herself, and to appear unconcerned, "that compliments in general deserve a common place reception."

Forrester had in vain struggled to resume his composure, and finding it utterly impossible to reduce the tone of his feelings so suddenly, he hastily took his leave; though not without betraying his agitation, and, almost rushing out of the room. Emily herself could not quite conquer her feelings ,though afraid of betraying

them before Lord Orville, whose eye was fixed upon her varying countenance.

"You seem agitated, Miss Hartley," observed he; then, in a bantering tone, he proceeded: "What, I dare swear, Forrester has been recalling to your memory those halcyon days, when, like shepherds and shepherdesses of Arcadia, you wandered through daisied meadows and shady groves. I can easily imagine Forrester to play a sighing shepherd remarkably well, and to prove an excellent lover, for the country. I can readily believe now, that every tree in the neighbourhood has bled with the characters of your name, which has regularly undergone a "Course of Bark," as Hood punningly calls it. I suppose the echoes have forgotten to respond to any other name than that of Emily; and that the murmuring streams have rolled their limpid waves but as an accompaniment to sapphic lays, chaunted in a voice, so musical and melancholy, that nightingales have left their native groves, and joined chorus."

"A truce, a truce, my Lord," said Emily,

with a languid smile; while she inwardly shrunk from Orville's badinage; who at once relinquishing his lighter tones, continued more earnestly:

"And was such a mind and form as Miss Hartley's created only to be seen and enjoyed by rustics and nightingales? Was she blest with talents, that make her the delight of the gayest circles, only to display them where they can never be properly appreciated? or was the poignancy of her wit, given her, but to satirize a few dowdy country neighbours; and fill up the scandalous chronicle of a country tea-table? No, no, I will not do the world so much injustice as to place so fair a flower among those, which were born

—— "To blush unseen
And waste their sweetness on the desert air."

"Oh, my Lord, you overpower me," exclaimed Emily, "indeed you do. The country, I feel, was my proper sphere. I possess none of those elegant arts of society."

"Where nature has done so much," interrupted Lord Orville, "art is but an intruder; a little light reading under my direction, will

soon brush off the prejudices of your country preceptress; who, unused to the world, is insensible to the burthen, which such sentiments are in society."

"Yes, my Lord," but these sentiments are for the well-being of society," said Emily.

"So, those who are prejudiced by them will tell you," replied Lord Orville. "So, the ill-natured cynic lays down the law; while the cold philosopher, devoid of passion and sensibility himself, preaches from the narrow precincts of his tub against their indulgence in others, with the calmness of a stoic; and calculates upon success, as a cabinet minister at home reckons upon an easy victory abroad; because he does not see the dangers and difficulties of the battle. The gods gave us our passions; men have had the presumption to impose customs which would violate the first principles of our nature. Which ought we to obey? Here," continued he, taking up an open volume, "see what Pope says on the master passion of our natures:

> "Love, free as air, at sight of human ties
> Spreads his light wings——"

"Oh, my Lord, forbear your arguments, lest you should dazzle me by their brilliancy, into a premature belief of their truth."

Lord Orville saw the power he possessed, at least over her imagination, if he had yet attained none over her heart or judgment; and, uncertain yet in his own mind, as to his intentions, he pursued his advantage recklessly, without giving it a thought, that if he ultimately fell into the plans of his mother, he was undermining the principles of his future wife. Orville, however, derived a pleasure in overturning established opinions, and in the subversion of received rules, even when he had no end to accomplish. There was a kind of recklessness in his philosophy, and of carelessness, with which he threw his powers of ridicule, even into the most sacred subjects, that delighted him, because it astonished others; and, with regard to women, he derived a selfish pleasure from winning affections which he had no intention of returning, and by which he had no hope of profiting. He could not, however, behold one, so lovely and innocent, as the girl who stood before him, without feeling something more than

he had for most women; and ideas, beyond mere words, for a moment crossed his mind as he pursued his theme.

"Nay, Miss Hartley, I wish to owe your conversion to our modern tenets to conviction alone, and, where can you find greater conviction, than in your own feelings. Suppose that you, all trembling sensibility as you are, should find a congenial soul; and, that soul, inspired by affection, by passion, should pour forth its raptures at your feet; should seize your trembling hand thus and lay it to a heart whose pulsations beat for you alone"—and here, having taken Emily by the hand, he appeared to be the impassioned lover he represented, when the door was suddenly opened, and, before either of them were aware of his presence, the Admiral stood before them.

Emily started, blushed, and was almost overcome by her emotion.

The Admiral was as much startled as herself. And exclaiming, "Avast there," and, stuttering out an excuse about sorrow and interruption,

was retiring, when Lord Orville opening his box, coolly said:

"Oh! not at all, Admiral; I was only giving Miss Hartley some idea of natural philosophy."

"Experimental philosophy, you mean," said the Admiral, chuckling at his own joke; and then, recollecting his information, that an attachment existed between Emily and Forrester, he executed a loud whistle, and continued: "But, Miss Emily, since the wind lays in this quarter—"

"For heaven's sake, Sir," interrupted Emily, almost overcome by her agitation. But the Admiral was on his usual tack of sincerity, and was not to be stopped; and continued:

"No, no, we must not have Forrester deceived any longer. He is a worthy fellow; though he is, perhaps a little too moral and sentimental."

Emily was overcome with confusion at this plain sailing speech of the Admiral; and was attempting some stammering explanation, when Mr. Tadpole was announced: who, scarcely noticing Emily or the Admiral, in his haste to

pleased Lord Orville, drew him aside, and in a half whisper, said,

"Well, my Lord, I followed her home." Lord Orville looked surprized.

"Oh, Langley, you know, told me—blue pelisse, cottage bonnet—" and shaking his head significantly, he proceeded; "no fear from me. It was in vain she twitched round the corners, and bobbed up the alleys — determined to oblige your Lordship, I traced her to a house in——" here his whispering became very low; "and, as I came away, who should I see enter, but Forrester—there's a sly dog for you!"

Lord Orville now comprehended, that Mr. Tadpole had performed the office which he had required at the hands of Langley; though how he became so commissioned, he was at a loss to conceive, but was delighted, by any means, to learn intelligence of his incognita of the morning.

Emily, who could not help hearing some part of what Mr. Tadpole said, started with a feeling, almost akin to jealousy, as, from the little she gathered, she found the communication related

to some female; and she inwardly asked herself, "Can he deceive me?"

The Admiral, who did not at all like the unceremonious manner in which he had been treated by the intruder; and catching, here and there, a word or two of the communication, without hearing the truth, sharply exclaimed:

"Eh, what's that about twitching and bobbing, and Forrester?"

"Oh, nothing, Admiral," coolly answered Lord Orville; "but that Tadpole was telling me that Forrester—didn't you say Forrester——?"

"Oh yes, Forrester," replied the civil Mr. Tadpole, delighted at the familiar manner in which Lord Orville had mentioned his name.

"That Forrester desired him to follow some pretty woman home."

"Eh; how, my Lord?" exclaimed Tadpole: but was immediately silenced by a look from Orville, who proceeded:

"And he says he left Forrester there just now: was not that it, Tadpole?"

"Oh yes; just so; exactly so; just as your Lordship says; your Lordship is always in the

right;" hastily said Tadpole, without knowing what he was asserting, only that he was agreeing with a Lord.

"What!" exclaimed the Admiral, "Forrester, a gay deceiver? the specious fellow—the demure scoundrel; he, of all people, to be running riot!"

Emily had a mixed feeling at intelligence so unexpected; at this instant it would have pained her more to have discovered that Orville had deceived her, than to think that Forrester had been guilty of any dereliction; and, almost wanting an excuse for her own versatility, she experienced something like a pleasure in finding that apology for her own conduct in Forrester's change, which would have been denied her by his constancy. Happy, at any rate, to escape from the observation of the Admiral, she quitted the room, and hurried away to Clara, for the purpose of using this apology for the variation in her opinions with regard to Edward Forrester.

"D—n the fellow! One may swear at deception," said the Admiral. Then approaching Lord Orville, "Orville, my boy, give me your

hand, for I love an open-hearted rake, as much as I despise a hypocritical libertine."

"Aye, Admiral," replied Orville, "you see it is not always the moral outside that hides the best heart."

"But I'll be about his ears—I wont let the son of my old friend turn out a scoundrel without telling him of it." And away bounced the Admiral in search of Forrester.

Mr. Tadpole, who had stood silent during the latter part of this scene, taken quite by surprize, looked at Orville for an explanation.

"Nothing but a hoax, Tadpole, a mere hoax, a joke upon Forrester's morality," said Orville. "But come, my dear fellow, we will take a stroll, and you shall tell me all the particulars." And away they went, the civil Mr. Tadpole well rewarded for the dirtiest action of which a man can be guilty, by walking down St. James's Street, arm in arm, with a peer.

CHAPTER VII.

THE MILLINER.

Is there a heart that never lov'd,
Nor felt soft woman's sigh;
Is there a man can mark unmov'd
Dear woman's tearful eye.

DEVIL'S BRIDGE.

WE must not, however, in our history of Emily and her suitors, forget the humble Caroline and her lover; for milliners have hearts as well as their betters, and they break *sometimes*. Caroline's story forms only an episode in our general history; and, perhaps some of my readers will recollect, that it is not the first time a pretty milliner has formed an episode in a man's life. "Where there is a will there is a way," is one of those proverbs, that, like most of the old

adages, is a true one; and, however wayward the will may be, there are generally means, if industriously sought, sufficient to gratify it. Caroline Dormer had felt too much delight in the renewal of her intercourse with Hartley, to give up the continuance of it; and she was not long, therefore, before she found a person to whom she confided her secret, and who agreed to accompany her in her future interviews. This was the daughter of the humble and distant relative, who had received her on her arrival in town; and who had procured for her the situation in which Hartley had discovered her. The confidante was several years older than herself; and this was some salvo to the conscience of Caroline, and, in her eyes, made her presence a more proper sanction for her meetings with Hartley, than if she had merely been of her own age. Fanny Thompson, however, though older, had not bought prudence, either with her years, or her experience; and could not but wonder at the folly of Caroline, in wishing her interviews with her lover thus to be intruded on by a third person, who, according to her notions (I must

not dignify them by the title of ideas) must spoil all the pleasure of the meeting. At any rate, this would have been her opinion of any third person who had been present at such interviews, when she too had lovers. At first, therefore, she attempted to argue Caroline out of the intention of being always accompanied, and to persuade her that it was but quite "right, natural, and proper," to use her own words, "to give the gentleman the meeting by herself." When, however, she found, that, by accompanying her friend, she received sundry valuable presents; and became the partaker of many pleasures, of the enjoyment of which, she had no chance by any other means; she soon became content with her rôle of confidante, and contrived every means in her power to be as little "de trop" as possible.

Intimation that the "convenient friend" was found, was soon therefore conveyed to Hartley; who was not long in availing himself of the opportunities which this afforded him of seeing Caroline. From the moment he had discovered her, his heart had revolted at the idea of her

menial situation, for in no other light could he consider it. He could not bear the idea of the woman he loved, working for her daily bread; and he used every argument in his power to induce her to quit it, and to accept the means of existence from himself, until some change, that might place them in a different position with regard to each other, should take place.

To this proposal, however, Caroline would not listen for a moment: circumstances, he had candidly told her, prevented his yet daring to propose their marriage to his family; and, till such a certainty as that occurred, she determined to accept nothing from him, and prided herself on her humble independence. Not even a present, beyond a plain locket with his hair, could he prevail upon her to accept, nor would she permit him to do any thing that could add to the comfort, or ameliorate the disagreeableness, of her situation.

The circumstances to which Hartley alluded, were, in fact, precisely the same as they were when they last parted; but the additional knowledge of the world, which he had acquired since

his entrance into life, and, in the various scenes through which he had passed, in his short career, had made the possibility of their marriage very debateable ground in his own mind. He had lived with a set of young men, who treated the marriage tie as a jest; to whom, many a husband was only an object of pity or of ridicule; and who only looked upon matrimony as a method of extending their connection, power, or fortune.

Nothing unhinges the morals of a young and inexperienced heart so much as this light conversation on serious subjects. Nothing loosens the influence of morality and religion in a mind, unused to think for itself, and to draw and act upon its own conclusions, more, than to hear sacred subjects treated jestingly and with levity.

The mind is shocked by open blasphemy, and shrinks from broad indelicacy; but the perpetual light shafts that are launched against serious subjects and institutions, in the common intercourse of conversation, soon undermines the respect which those feel for them, whose reverence is not founded on something stronger than that of mere habit or imitation.

Mortified, as Hartley was at this determination of Caroline to owe him nothing but the pleasure derived from his society; it yet, almost unknown to himself, raised her in his estimation. The presents were therefore all transferred to Miss Fanny Thompson the confidante, who treated them, as Fatima's father does the camels in Colman's drama of Blue Beard, and seemed to "whip them in with their own tails," by the readiness with which she accepted them.

Caroline's hours of business—do not let polite ears be shocked, that one of our heroines is obliged to number such hours—occupied her, from eight in the morning till eight in the evening; and to those regulations which ordained this as the time to be devoted to labour, as well as the time at which she was expected to rejoin her companions at home, were both rigidly adhered to by Caroline, in spite of all the remonstrances, and sometimes anger, of Hartley.

Her labour, however, now no longer hung heavy on her hands; she had recollections and anticipations to lighten their burthen; her life was again a life of hope, and, as she counted the

tedious hours as they passed, she had something to look forward to at the end of them, which promised her pleasure—and what a pleasure too! the society of the man she loved. Those women who have loved truly, will well know how much of pain such a pleasure will repay; and Hartley's passions, if not his affections, were sufficiently engaged, scarcely to let an evening elapse that he did not pass in the society of Caroline from eight till eleven. She was devotedly fond of music; he was careful, therefore, to secure a secluded box in one of the higher tiers for every opera night, where he was delighted at the pleasure she experienced, and surprized at the superior knowledge of the science which she evinced. On these nights, the confidante, whom he had supplied with a capital glass by Dollond, for that purpose, amused herself by admiring the dresses in the boxes, and counting the bald heads in the pit; and though she was insensible to the music of Mozart or Rossini, she was by no means indifferent to the dancing, which excited in her various inclinations to giggle, and exclamations of "Oh, my!"

at the tremendous exposé of limbs in "*Pirouettes renversées*," &c. She was, however, perpetually interrupting the tête-a-tête of the lovers, by inquiries as to who were the different occupiers of the boxes; a curiosity, which Hartley was perfectly capable of gratifying, from his extensive intercourse in fashionable society. Fanny Thompson at length however became tired of the opera. It was a mighty dull piece of business; nothing but a parcel of music, which gave her no pleasure, and all in a language which she did not understand; she therefore, at length, generally sought a refuge from ennui in sleep; a circumstance, upon which Hartley congratulated himself aloud; and, which, we must own, did not create any thing like sorrow in Caroline.

On other evenings, when some performance at the English theatres promised greater entertainment than usual, a private box was provided; and here the confidante was much more at home. She could weep with Juliet or Belvidera, and laugh with Liston or Harley; enter into the drollery and pathos of Mathews, whose delineations of human nature come home to

every man's bosom; and enjoy the vivacity of Yates; and drew comparisons between Drury Lane and Covent Garden, and the King's Theatre, not at all to the advantage of the latter. On fine nights, when the moon was bright and the air not too cold, the carriage would drive them to the gate of Hyde-park, or a mile or two into the country; where the few hours of Caroline's liberty were spent in walking with her lover by moonlight, and in the interchange of sentiments, which on these occasions was more delightful, and frequently more dangerous, than in the midst of a crowded theatre, with other objects to distract her attention. Sometimes, but very seldom, and, not till her confidence in Hartley had been fully established; would she accompany Fanny to his rooms in the Albany, where a petit souper (his dinner) was provided in his library; and here, perhaps, that domestic intercourse which was the consequence of evenings spent thus, tended, as much as any thing, to rivet her affections still more closely. On these occasions, the hours were passed in conversation and reading; and by this interchange of their opi-

nions, they thought they discovered a similarity of sentiment and feeling, which fitted them for each other. I say, thought; because when persons have an inclination for each other, they are too apt to imagine a congeniality, which, in after times, they are surprised to find never existed in reality. Few people deceive themselves or each other so much as lovers do. Thinking and wishing alike in one great point, they are too apt to take it for granted that their thoughts and wishes are the same upon all others; and the desire to please, while they are lovers, not only helps the deception, but frequently induces the adoption of each other's opinions as their own.

It was in these visits, that Caroline frequently surprized Hartley by the powers of her conversation, and by the extent of her acquirements, as well as pleased him, by her proficiency at the piano. She might not execute with the precision of a professed player, or of one of those amateurs who fall little short of the excellence of professors; but she played with a feeling which proved how much of her soul was in the occupation; and

sang the plaintive ballads, with which our native music abounds, in a style, calculated to produce an effect, with which Miss Stephens herself might have been gratified. Her reading had been desultory, and the rudiments of that education instilled by her mother had not been regularly acted upon, after that lady's decease. Historical reading had been mixed with romance; didactic studies had been mingled with poetry; and natural inclination leading her much more into the world of fiction, than the dry paths of dull truth; Caroline had formed her ideas of life, more from romance, than reality. Her father, whose sole ideas of education were bounded, like a true old Oxonian, by the classics; had indulged his own inclinations by giving her an insight into the literature of the ancients; so that, though perhaps inferior to other women in some points, she was their superior in those which do not generally form portions of female acquirement. This kind of mixed education, and living much with her father, who was a man of profound erudition, had given her a strength of mind beyond her years; but the indulgence of her poetical incli-

nations had added to the tenderness of her disposition, and created a heart peculiarly formed to love, and to love devotedly.

These evenings were perhaps among the most pleasant, not only of those which Hartley passed with Caroline; but of those which he passed any where. It is true that eleven o'clock was too early an hour for such interviews to interfere materially with his evening engagements; but he always found the most splendid party insipid after quitting Caroline, whom he generally set down with her friend, in his way to his routs or quadrilles.

Their evening interviews were of course limited to the usual three hours; but on Sundays they spent the whole day together. On these mornings, a carriage generally waited to receive Caroline and her friend in St. James's Square, in which Hartley accompanied them to some one of those many pleasant places within a drive from the metropolis; always taking care to choose those, where they were not likely to encounter the pleasure-seeking cocknies. Here, they enjoyed each other's society, admired the beauties of nature; and, the only alloy to the

pleasures of the day was the anticipation of parting in the evening. It was on these days that Caroline sometimes gave herself up to the full delight of her enjoyment of her lover's society; here she reposed in full security upon hi arm, listened to his conversation, and, if her lips did not utter the fullness of her love, Hartley delighted to read it in her looks.

There were but two drawbacks upon the pleasures Hartley experienced in these interviews; the one arising from the uncertainty of his own meaning, motives, and intentions; and the other, from the interrupting presence of the eternal Fanny Thompson. She seemed to sit, with her quiet face, like an incubus upon his pleasures; and it required all his innate politeness, and all his consideration for Caroline, to treat her with the civility which always characterized his behaviour to her; for he was civil to her, even at the moment that he could have thrown her out of the opera box into the pit, or out of the windows of his chambers into the area, for the purpose of getting a few moments with Caroline alone. Yet, the poor woman did her best to make herself agreeable; she slept over a

book in the Albany; shut her eyes, if she did not sleep, in the corner of the carriage, and kept her attention perpetually fixed upon the stage at the theatres: still, there she was, and Monsieur Tonson was never a greater plague to the poor Frenchman in the Seven Dials, than his female namesake was to Hartley. It was in vain that he pleaded for her absence: in spite of the perfect confidence which she placed in the honour of her lover, Caroline was determined upon this point; it was the salvo to her conscience; the appui, upon which she supported the apology for her interviews; and she would not give way to him in this instance.

It is almost impossible to describe how much these repeated meetings increased the love of Caroline for Hartley. His undiminished and perpetual attentions; the delicacy with which he sought to give her pleasure; the respect which he paid her person; and the superior conversation, and the intellectual delight which she enjoyed in her interviews with him; all tended to render her heart more devoted than ever, to the only man in whose favour it had ever experienced a feeling.

The contrast of these hours with those spent in her uninteresting labours, increased their effect upon her imagination; and, although their enjoyment did not diminish her industry, they certainly sometimes rendered the time devoted to her daily occupation, a little more tedious.

The history of Caroline and Hartley is by no means an uncommon one in this metropolis; as, if walls had tongues as well as ears, might be pretty well substantiated by the evidence of those of the Albany, Carlton Chambers, the Temple, and other domiciles appropriated to single gentlemen. Luckily, however, or perhaps unluckily, these mural evidences are silent; and there is no Paul Pry of an Asmodeus to lay open the various scenes which take place within their precincts; as a warning, to deter future victims from that fate to which they have been witnesses.

This "*lutte*" between the virtue of a millener, and the temptations which a gentleman has it in his power to offer her, we have always considered but a very unfair contest. It is a hawk pursuing a butterfly. A woman, with but little educa-

tion, and condemned by the poverty of the situation in which she is born, to earn her bread by a laborious employment, unfortunately attracts by her beauty the attention of some sensualist of fashion. His rank in life, in his own opinion, gives him a right to make any attempt he pleases; and he is generally secure from the resentment of brothers and cousins, even should he excite that of the object of his pursuit. Let us imagine, however, what is very natural, and perhaps too generally the case; that the attentions of one of superior rank are not disagreeable; and that a person in this situation is imprudent enough to permit their being paid; and, in time, to grant interviews, that are solicited, under professions, of the heartlessness of which the poor girl is not aware.

Pleasures are procured for her, of the existence of which she was till this time ignorant; presents are made; and enjoyments offered, of a nature that her own situation in life must have for ever precluded; her leisure moments are spent in drives, theatres, and various pursuits, which disgust her with her ordinary occupa-

tions; and, in society, which makes her look with contempt upon the every-day companions of her labour. Her ideas rise above her circumstances; no time is left for reflection; every thing that can gratify the senses, or accelerate the pleasures of the passing moment are presented to her inexperience; and she falls a prey to the designing sensualist who has marked her for his own, and hunted her over paths of flowers till his succeeding indifference withers them up, and leaves his victim nothing before her, but to retrace her steps through pain, humiliation, and repentance; or to pursue a career which must ultimately end in destruction.

It is surprising, what pains are taken by a certain set of men in the seduction of women of this class of society. During the pursuit, nothing is spared; splendid promises are made, and believed; money is lavished in presents; like a victim destined to be immolated upon the altar, every wish, however capricious, is gratified. But these efforts once crowned with success, how the scene changes! There is such a run at the Opera, that there is no box to be pro-

cured—carriage horses are lame, or the cab under repair—a family is come to town, and a father may be offended at his absence—young men become suddenly filial who never thought of their parents before in their lives. In short, there is never wanting an excuse to avoid the performance of those promises which had misled; or to realize the anticipations, which had misguided the unfortunate girl. If she have a virtuous mind, and a sensitive heart, the disappointment ruins her health and spirits; and bitterness and remorse are her portion. If, on the contrary, all virtuous dispositions have been eradicated, and it has been her vanity and levity, rather than her affections, by which she has been deluded, she vents her spleen in reproaches, and pursues the same course with others.

Look into the lives of nine tenths of those unfortunates who form decidedly the most pitiable class of society in the world; and you may trace a history similar to that which we have attempted above.

Caroline Dormer was, however, superior to any such temptations as these; and Hartley certainly

was not guilty in his intentions towards her. They both felt the delight of being together, and Caroline derived her ideas of security, or rather never thought herself in danger, from the perfect confidence she placed in her lover. There was one thing neither of them ventured; they never anticipated; they reversed the scripture phrase, and seemed to think that "sufficient for the day was the good thereof." In this instance, at any rate, they thought with Seneca, that it was wise "to enjoy the present without any anxious dependence for the future."

Hartley never thought of the future at all; or, if he did, was totally unconscious of what it might produce; and, when it would force itself upon Caroline's mind, it was always sweetened by some romantic hope, that circumstances would, at length, favour their union.

In the mean time their meetings became still more frequent. No opportunity of seeing each other was lost; till poor Fanny Thompson began herself to be almost tired of her part; and proffered a silent wish, that Mr. Hartley had some kind friend, who would take upon himself

to relieve her from the tedium of the many hours she was compelled to pass with the lovers. Sometimes, the total neglect of the Sabbath duties, which this kind of life induced, gave a pang of momentary repentance to Caroline, as she recollected how differently that day was wont to be passed; but this was banished, the moment she saw Hartley's beaming eye and happy countenance, smiling his welcome, and his approbation at her punctuality, out of the carriage window; and was never remembered, till the Sunday was over, and she was in bed, trying to recal every word that he had uttered, and attempting to live over again the events and conversations of the day.

These meetings were, however, now to be interrupted by the illness of Fanny Thompson; who, having no ardour to defend her from damp evenings, caught cold from a water excursion with the lovers, and became so ill as to be confined to her bed with a rheumatic fever. Night after night did Caroline attend her three hours by her bedside; and, physician after physician, was sent by Hartley, in the hopes of effecting a speedy cure;

still Fanny's "recreant limbs" refused their office. Flower of mustard, warm baths, flesh brushes, and Caroline's attentions, were useless; the obstinate fever still maintained its ground; and, during this period, Caroline was resolute in her determination not to see Hartley. It was in vain he pleaded; in vain he wrote; in vain he way-laid her in her nightly visits to her friend; he could obtain nothing but the privilege of a hurried walk with her from Regent-street to Fanny's lodging, which was situated in some gothic street in Holborn.

The many, many times that Hartley had wished the confidante, or, as he designated her, the duenna, at the bottom of the sea; or seized with the gout, or the cramp, or any thing that would have prevented her from forming a trio with himself and Caroline, now occurred to his memory by way of punishment. He had little anticipated the possibility of the time arriving, when he should devoutly pray for the health and presence of the eternal Fanny Thompson. No bulletin, however, of a prince was more anxiously expected by a minister he patronized,

and whose office depended upon the master's convalescence; than the nightly and matinal report of the progress of Fanny Thompson's disorder. As for her mother, she was quite astonished at the constant inquiries of a dashing livery servant after the health of her daughter, and almost began to suspect that all was not quite right, and to question Fanny more particularly.

In the expectation that a few days would terminate her friend's illness, Caroline waited with patience, and adhered, without much difficulty, to her resolution to forego the pleasure of Hartley's society, and to deny him the usual interviews. But, as week after week passed on, without any amelioration of Fanny's complaint, the privation became almost too great for her to bear. She became irritable and impatient: memory painted the happy hours she had spent, and her feelings contrasted them woefully with the present. She became angry with herself — with Fanny — with the rheumatic fever — with the whole world. In the mean time, Hartley wrote to her daily; and in every letter became

more and more urgent for a renewal of their intercourse. He recalled to her mind its innocence; he pictured to her the past prudence of his conduct; and was sometimes so hurried away by the impetuosity of his feelings, that none could have read his letters, and doubted his intentions of making Caroline his wife, although there was no explicit declaration of the kind. The hurried interviews, which he contrived in the street, only added to the irritation of both parties; since they were passed in violent pleadings and reproaches on his part, and forced denials on hers; till, at length, they were both worked up to such a state of mutual excitement, that they were each of them almost in as great a fever as poor Fanny Thompson herself.

Caroline found her daily occupation more distasteful than ever. She became restless, and uneasy; the days seemed interminable, and her nights were in reality sleepless; and Hartley's daily threatening and half-angry letters preyed upon her mind.

As to Hartley, he alternately cursed the eternal fever of Fanny, and prayed for her reco-

very; then entreated, and then scolded, Caroline; accused her of want of affection, of want of confidence, and scarcely ever quitted her, in their now short interviews, without leaving her in tears.

At length his perseverance began to prevail. Caroline recollected the reasons she had for confidence in him — her own heart sickened at the total absence of that intercourse, which had been so delicious, and from which she had derived so much pleasure, and pleaded for a partial revival of it. Fanny's recovery seemed farther removed than ever, and her delicacy prevented her venturing to make another confidante. Under all these circumstances, and unable herself to bear, with any degree of equanimity, the almost total absence which she had of late compelled herself to endure, she began to relent; and at length agreed to meet her lover once more, upon the first Sunday; upon the express stipulation, however, that it was only to be for a morning drive in his cabriolet.

Some may imagine, by the difficulty that Caroline made in granting this meeting, or, indeed,

at any time, in meeting Hartley alone, that she doubted either herself or her lover. But this was not the case. Caroline always looked forward, at some period or other, to be his wife; and, should that ever be the case, she knew that prudence, under the present circumstances, would excite and ensure future confidence and esteem; and, as the wife of Hartley, she wished to look back to her present trying situation, without having the slightest breach of delicacy with which to reproach herself.

Secure in Caroline's promise, Hartley tasted of the first real pleasure since the period of Fanny Thompson's illness; and though Caroline's heart trembled as she made it, she too derived some comfort at the anticipation of again seeing her lover as she had done. Thus they both anticipated the coming Sunday with anxiety; he all impatience, that made every intervening moment seem an age; and she with a trembling anticipation of the pleasure it was to bring her, that rather shortened than lengthened the hours she had to pass before it arrived.

At length came that Saturday night which

closes the labours of the week; and away hurried the common world to their marketing, and the fashionable world to the completion of their weekly pleasures at the Opera.

Caroline spent the evening as usual, by Fanny Thompson's bed-side — Hartley wiled it away at the Opera; but neither of them counted that Saturday night as the best they had ever passed with regard to sleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

A SUNDAY.

The seventh day this—the jubilee of man.
London! right well thou know'st the day of prayer.
Then, thy spruced citizen, wash'd artizan,
And snug apprentice, gulp their weekly air.
Thy coach of hackney, whiskey, one horse chair,
And humblest gig, thro' sundry suburbs whirl;
To Hampstead, Brentford, Harrow, all repair,
Till the tired jade the wheel forgets to hurl,
Provoking envious gibe from each pedestrian churl.

CHILDE HAROLD.

SUNDAY! what a variety of sensations does this day of rest create. How many, ere its morning dawns, throw up their sash windows, and cast an anxious glance towards the east, to ascertain whether it is to be rain or sunshine; whether the new pelisse and bonnet are to be sported, and returned unspotted to their domi-

ciles of drawer and band-box, where, neatly papered, they are to rest while their mistress fags, to be again brought into work, when she takes her pleasure; or, whether these cherished garments are to be "drenched with envious rain." How many hearts flutter at the anticipation of what the pleasures of the day may produce; and how many would willingly prolong its hours through the remainder of the week, insensible that it derives more than half the enjoyment for which they prize it, from the very circumstance of its recurring but *once*, in the seven days.

Whether it is looked upon, in a religious point of view, as a day set apart from worldly concerns, to be devoted to Him, who himself "rested on the seventh day from all his work;" or merely considered in a political one, as a day of rest from the laborious toils of the week, as the only day of pleasure out of the seven; there is scarcely a person, excepting in the monotonous existence of extreme haut-ton, where every day is alike passionless and pleasureless, because it is the same, upon whose mind Sunday does not exert some species of influence.

The merchant, who finds his repose in calculating the profits of his week's speculations;—the tradesman, who quits for twenty-four hours the diminutive parlour, which commands the rich and pleasant prospect of his till, for the drawing-room, ten feet square, whose shutters are never open but when those of the shop are closed, and whose chilling comforts are, through the thriftiness of his spouse, only on that day permitted to be warmed;—the clerk, who shovels about sovereigns, which are not his own, for six days in the week; with no pleasant anticipation, but the pleasure of spending the one which is his own on the seventh, and whose dry pursuits are only relieved by dreams of hacks, tilburies, and Rotten-row, or floating ideas of sailing-boats, and Chelsea-reach;—the lover, whose only chance of catching a glimpse of the blue eye that has ensnared his heart, or of the black eye, which may one day be his own, bestowed either by the hand of his fair one, or the fist of his rival; is at the parish church; where he contrives to utter "We beseech thee to hear us" so loud, as to penetrate to the heart of his mistress

in the next pew, who, with a little egotistical variation of the text, not at all uncommon in the fair part of the creation, contrives to appropriate the sentence to herself;—the debtor, who looks upon it as a day of freedom from the duns of creditors and the dread of bailiffs—all have their separate hopes and expectations.

Nor has Sunday a less degree of influence on that sex, who are "the blight and bloom of every man's happiness" — from the fat Mrs. Figgins, in the grocery line, who enters her church in a new plumb-coloured pelisse, in the religious hope of seeing envy sparkle in the saucer eyes of the crockery-dealing Mrs. Grundy; to the tender miss in her teens, who, treading in the steps of her mamma, ventures one glance at her enamorato over the side of the pew, as she utters the words, "That it may please thee to give us a heart to love," while the said mamma is buried in a profound nap in the deep recesses of her black beaver, or cabriolet bonnet, in which her head, covered with *saucissons*, is enveloped.

Sunday is a day, in which a religious man

settles his account with heaven, and a worldly one balances his accounts in the ledger; in which a clergyman prides himself upon his new sermon, and his wife upon her new pelisse. In other countries it is characterized by masses, homilies, operas, quadrilles, and fandangoes; and in England, by prayer and pleasure; religion and rioting; going out without fear of molestation; and being "at home" to single knocks, without the dread of their announcing the importunity of a dun upon the purse, or the title of a bailiff to the person. It is a day in which every person, out of the pale of polite life, for it is truly unpolite to make any difference on a Sunday, finds some variation from the monotony of existence, and makes up for the fag of the last six days, by laying up recollections to amuse the tedium of the six ensuing.

In this enumeration of the pursuits which characterize an English, or rather a metropolitan, Sunday, we must not, however, forget that there are many who rise with a full sense of its importance upon those points for which we are taught that it is set apart; and who, in

the quiet preparation for the morning's worship, and the unaffected solemnity of the evening's devotion, in which the infant kneels with the mother, and the servant mingles his aspirations with those of his master, find a truer pleasure as they quietly repose their heads upon their pillow, at the close of a day spent in this holy communion of spirit and of sentiment, than those who have sought their enjoyment in an idle excursion of worldly pleasure; their mirth, amidst the riot and confusion of a tavern, or their consequence in a well-appointed equipage.

Caroline had passed nearly a sleepless night; and, when worn out with watching, she sank for a few moments into forgetfulness, her dreams were any thing but pleasant. She rejoiced, therefore, that the morning avocation did not require her usual early rising, and, contrary to her custom, she remained in her bed long after every other inmate of this dormitory of the industrious priestesses of this pandemonium had quitted their pillows, and congratulated each other on the promising prospect of a fine day, afforded

by the blue sky, and by the reflected gleams of the sun, which shone upon the opposite attics.

Disturbed, however, by the whisking of kerchiefs and ribands, and by all the bustle of the toilet, which rendered the room a little Babel, as far as the confusion of tongues could make it so, she arose; and, dressing herself all but her outer garment, she sat down quietly, or lent any assistance that her more impatient companions might require.

These, without having read any works on the division of labour; or made any abstruse calculation, upon the rule of three principle, that if one pair of hands can do so much within a given time, so many more could accomplish a larger quantity of work, had certainly hit upon some methods by which much time at the toilet was saved. As one instance of which, these young political economists laced each other's stays in a circle; by which means this operation was performed for six pair of Robinson's, or Vestirin's corsets, in precisely the same quantity of time that was necessary for the completion of one. Unluckily, the circle was a little disturbed on the

morning in question, by the circumstance of one of the laces having suddenly given away at an additional twitch required by the superior rotundity of one of the young ladies; in consequence of which, the upright position of the fair operators was slightly disturbed; and they were thrown, on what a sailor would have called "their beam ends," by the necessary consequence of missing stays.

As for Caroline, she was not long suffered to remain idle. It was, "Oh Miss Dormer, pin this riband on"—"Dear Miss Dormer, tie my sash"—"Button my frock, there's a dear"—"Do now just take this stitch up, there's a love"—"Pray pull out my sleeves"—"Oh dear, do tuck in this little bit of white;" et cetera, et cetera; till the whole operation of the toilet was finished, and Caroline was again suffered to repose in quiet on the corner of the bed. During this process, many a fair face, while waiting for its turn at the single looking-glass allowed for their adornment, popped out of the window with an anxious glance towards the sky; while each, like the smooth surface of the silver lake,

reflected the clouds, or brightness of the heavens, in the disappointment which appeared upon their brow, or the exultation which dwelt in their smiles, as hope or fear predominated as to rain or sunshine.

At length, all the ceremonials of lacing, tying, stitching, and arranging was finished, and the looking-glass left to its own reflections. Then arose other anxieties; no less than those experienced for the arrival of the beaux, for whom these operations of the toilet had been endured. Every head was now, therefore, stretched out of the windows to catch the first glimpse of the cicesbeo for the day; and each enjoyed her anticipations of the figure her beau might cut, in comparison with those of her companions.

At last a tilbury turns the corner. A general agitation proclaims that it comes for *one;* and a particular blush, or flush, or whatever that delightful suffusion may be called, which animates alike the countenance of the duchess and the dairy-maid, in love and in hate, in anger and in delight, designates which that *one* is. "Oh Anna," exclaimed half a dozen at once, "it is

Mr. Jenkins, I declare." Anna does not know the tilbury, for it is a different one every Sunday; she does not know the stud, for many and various are the black, white, and grey, geldings, mares, and galloways, with which the livery stable keeper kindly permits her beau, to risk her neck, as well as his own, for the trifling remuneration of fifteen shillings for the day. But she does recognize the bright blue coat, with velvet collar to match; and Anglesey-coloured wellingtons, which met her full approbation when first put on six months since; she does recognize the redundancy of frill which lies plaited between the stripes of his waistcoat; the shirt collar which intrudes upon the well-trimmed whisker up to the ear, which looks a little "dog's eared" from the custom of wearing a pen behind it for six days out of the seven. She recognizes also the bushy hair, poodled under the hat; and the cloak lined with scarlet, whose shag collar, of the same bright hue, hangs gracefully pendant over the back of the tilbury, hiding certain indications of shabbiness in the vehicle, and astonishing the country natives

into temporary notions that its proprietor has some pretensions to military rank. Unacquainted with that dextrous turn of the wrist, and knowing near-side touch of the whip which brings stud and tilbury close up to the kirb (for once a week is not sufficient practice for good tilbury driving), he placed his horse in the same relative position to the door of his lady's domicile, that an inexperienced dancer places himself to his partner, when he has either pastourelled it too much, or pirouetted it too little, in a quadrille.

There was now a general shaking of hands—a little female kissing between bosom friends. "Good bye, Anna;" "a pleasant day, Anna;" and, "upon my word, Mr. Jenkins looks very well;" with other hastily uttered sentences, mingled with the leave-taking. A run to the glass gave the assurance that saucissons were all in order, and a run down stairs brought her to her lover; who, too careful, or too fearful, of his horse, to look up to the window, as he drove down the street, now for the first time gave his dulcinea's lilac spencer and pink plumes a look of approbation. Too sensible to

quit his seat, and leave his horse at liberty, through any mistaken politeness; he yet ventures, for once, to transfer the reins to his whip hand, as too many are apt to do when a favourite female is in the way, while he stretched out the other by way of assistance to his fair companion. She placed her kid-covered palm in his, and her foot on the step; one jerk seated her in the valley formed between the driving seat and the side of the gig; a little adjustment arranged her garment modestly over the pretty silk clad ancles; a corner of the aforesaid cloak gave its military protection against any accidental jolt, or zephyr; the parasol was waved up to the window by way of a last adieu; a few admonitory touches of the whip, very carefully administered, accompanied by a ya-up, soon induced the nag to put himself out of a stand-still, and off they started; the charioteer prudently deferring his how d'ye do's, and other greetings, till he should have got off the stones, and be in a good wide road, where he is in less danger of coming in contact with any rival Sunday jockey.

The attention of the party was now arrested

by the appearance of a glass-coach, or rather, a hackney-coach without its number, which now slowly drew up to the door. From this carriage sprang three young men, in readiness to hand their respective demoiselles into the vehicle, the hire of which had been clubbed at seven shillings each, so that they had none of the cares of driving on their hands, to impede their impatience or politeness.

One of these new comers had, like our tilbury friend, a dash of the military, and was accordingly habited in a blue frock-coat, the edges and seams covered with black lace, at which his mistress always looked when she favoured him with the air of "Should he upbraid;" while something resembling a duck's tail, but without its power of wagging, dangled at the bottom of his back. His black cravat is neatly fastened by two turquoise pins, chained together as strongly as man and wife, while his heels display a pair of spurs, which give their master the character of keeping a horse, without its attendant expense of rack and manger—for spurs eat nothing.

The second was of another order of beings—called, a swell. He was clothed in top-boots, white corduroys, a waistcoat scored like a leg of pork, and a rough drab toggray, buttoned across the chest with mother-of-pearl buttons of the size of crown pieces, while a horse and jockey appear to be galloping over the ponderous folds of his shawl neckcloth, by way of broach.

The third beau was a complete contrast to the second; for having by some accident heard that stockings were dress, he appears ready dressed for dinner at eight in the morning, with blue coat thrown open, white waistcoat, black trowsers, and ribbed silk stockings.

Adieux were soon uttered to the remaining friends. The looking-glass was once more put in requisition, the door flew open, and the belles and beaux greeted each other by hearty shakes of the hand. They were soon hurried into the coach, which wriggled with their settlement into the seat, and proved what one of the females of the party called a "tight fit." The swell cried out, "All right, Jarvey!" The

coachman woke from his momentary doze, and the patient horses walked off in a trot.

A prim, smirking-looking gentleman, seated exactly in the centre of a hackney-chariot, and of his shirt collar, the points of which endangered his eyes at every jolt; and most carefully avoiding any contact between the dirty lining of the vehicle and his well-brushed coat, carries off a fifth; while a short, thick-set, middle-aged man, with a blue coat of dimensions sufficiently ample for any two modern habits, his pockets looking like panniers, his corporation covered with an acre of black serge, which "the least taste in life" of Irish linen, divided from a pair of nankin trowsers that reached to the middle of his white cotton stockings, by his diagonal crossing seemed to direct his steps to the same house. But one now remained beside Caroline, and her white beaver bonnet was thrown back with disappointment, as she exclaimed, "dear me! here's Pa, instead of ——" The name died on her lips. The elderly gentleman was the only one who was compelled to knock at the door, or who was kept for a moment waiting.

"Well, good bye, Miss Dormer! sorry to leave you alone so solentary," was uttered in a tone of sympathy, and with a little more feeling than if she had been fetched by her lover instead of her father. She tripped slowly down stairs, opened the door, and found her hand suddenly twitched under her Papa's arm, and tightly confined between the elbow and the rib; while the ideas of the Park and Kensington Gardens fade before the prospect of the parish church or meeting house, and a dull cup of tea in the parlour behind the shop.

This young lady's mamma had been in the same line with her daughter in her younger days, and from her recollections of what happened to herself, made her good man go after "their Sophy," to preserve her from the same perils. The good woman herself is too prudent to mention her reasons for this caution, which are perhaps too well guessed by the husband—"experientia docet."

Caroline was now left alone. She had been too much occupied by her own thoughts to share in the hilarity of her companions, which

was, however, at all times quite dissonant with her ideas of pleasure. She had, however, cheerfully contributed her assistance to the toilet, and with sincerity wished them the pleasant day they expected; though she could scarcely prevent a smile of contempt from playing upon her full red lip as she contemplated their vulgar delights. As she lost sight of her last companion she began slowly to complete her own toilet, for which she had sufficient leisure, since several hours were yet to elapse before her politer lover would be in readiness to receive her. Caroline needed not much of the "foreign aid of ornament;" her beauty was of that cast which derives no aid from decoration; the simpler her attire the better she appeared, and the simplicity as well as correctness of her own taste, taught her that she was, "when unadorned adorned the most." Female vanity is, however, never entirely asleep upon this point; and as her features were reflected in the mirror, she could not help feeling the advantageous contrast which their regularity and expression exhibited, to the red, white, and plump

cheeks of her companions. Theirs was the beauty of health, hers that of sentiment.

There was the dark, liquid eye and blood-red lip, that bespeak a soul of deep feeling; the large ivory forehead, over which hung long curls of raven black hair, that reached to and rested upon the bosom—rendered whiter by the contrast; the pale cheek, that never exhibited the colour of the rose, unless called there by passion and feeling; the arched and dark brow: were all of that species of female loveliness which an artist would have selected to pourtray a Gulnare; and which, in the higher walks of life, would have given their possessor a place in that Gallery of Beauty which the "on dits" of the day say is preparing, to rival those which graced a gallery of the same description in the time of Charles the Second.

Little as Caroline had to do at her dressing-table, she yet lingered over her toilet, eking out all its minor occupations, so as to lessen, as much as possible, the hours that she should have to wait, between the time of its completion and the coming of her lover. At length, however,

every pin was placed; every fold adjusted; there no longer remained an excuse for another moment's lingering. Casting, therefore, one more look in the glass; taking up her bonnet, and, throwing her shawl over her arm, she descended to the first floor, which, serving as a show-room all the week, was set apart as the young ladies' drawing-room on Sundays.

Just as she entered the room, the striking of St. James's clock forced upon her mind the painful recollection of the length of time that must still elapse before Hartley was to come; and, for a moment she envied her companions, at least, the early rising of their lovers.

After pacing the room, a little impatiently, a few times, and casting an anxious glance at the window, as a few light clouds would now and then, for a moment, obscure the sun; she threw herself upon the sopha with a determination to wait with patience; and, who is there that has not frequently made this resolution, and as frequently broken it? Still Caroline's heart beat violently: she trembled, she knew not why, at the step she was about to take; and more than

once wavered in her purpose. But then came over her the recollection of Hartley's love; the fear of his anger; the knowledge of his honour and prudence; and, above all, her own knowledge and confidence in her own innocence; and she could not bear to inflict upon him the pain of disappointment, and perhaps did not like to bear it herself. Besides, it was but a drive for an hour or two; and poor Hartley had behaved so well, and undergone such privations lately; and then Fanny Thompson would be sure to be well by the next Sunday; and this, therefore, was the only time there would be a necessity for her seeing him alone. Still it was breaking through a resolution, founded upon her ideas of the preservation of self-respect; and she was uneasy.

The sudden tolling of the bell for church recalled to her mind, at this moment, all her long-forgotten duties. There was an association in the sound with all her recollections of early days, when it was the signal for her father and herself, to pursue their quiet path across the meadows that led to his parish church. There,

she was wont to help him to robe in the vestry, with the assistance of the aged clerk, who had cried Amen in the same desk for nearly sixty years. The pleasant meads; the meandering stream that ran through them; the peasantry doffing their hats, and bobbing their curtseys, as they passed; the vestry, with its bare walls and heavy-mullioned windows, almost obscured by the thick clusters of ivy which time had created there; the trembling hand of old Adam, as he assisted her in putting on the surplice: and, above all, the holy quiet of the humble church, as she slid silently into her pew, and sunk upon the hassock in a momentary prayer of preparation; all came over her mind with an intensity, and seemed to lie before her with a vividness, that, contrasting it with the present tumult of her heart, she buried her face with her hands, and burst into tears.

As she recovered from this burst of feeling, her eyes rested upon some books of devotion, which lay mingled with some novels on the mantle-shelf. She recollected the consolation she had derived from their perusal in the two great

griefs of her life—the death of her parents and her supposed desertion by Hartley; and she attempted to read them now, but their effect was lost. Her heart was cold to the influence of religion. The same subject was tasteless in the present state of her mind, and she again sat absorbed in her own feelings of mingled impatience for her lover's coming, and fear of his arrival. At length one of those seducing volumes in boards, with Andrews's name ont he back, yclept a novel, attracted her notice, and taking the book from the shelf, she sat down to it doggedly, with the determination to read. The subject of this book was more in accordance with the state of her mind. It was the history of a love not unlike her own, and she soon became interested in the fate of the heroine, and fancied a similar denouement in her own case. That clock, however, which during her impatience had given such painful note of the slow progress of time, at length struck the three quarters; she listened in vain for the fourth; but, no; there were still fifteen minutes to elapse. But Hartley was generally early; generally before his time.

The book was thrown away. The hat and scarf were laid where they could be the more readily seized when wanted. Her movements up and down the room now became quicker; her glances out of the window were no longer directed to the sky; at the rattle of every carriage she involuntarily approached the balcony; and, as it passed, and its sound died away in the distance, so faded the flush of hope from her countenance.

"No, No," she exclaimed, "he will not come before his time." The hour itself struck, and she raised her hands in thankfulness that the painful time of suspense was past.

As the sound of the clock died upon her ear, a sickening sensation came over her; a trembling anticipation that he might not come; and in that moment of agitation she felt, for the first time, how ardently she loved Hartley. She now listened and looked with an eagerness that was painful to both sight and hearing, and almost uttered an exclamation of joy, as she saw the cabriolet turn the corner of the street. The calash was up to its fullest extent of concealment; nothing was discernible from within

but the dove-coloured kid gloves of the driver, dexterously and gently managing the fine high-spirited bay, whose veins, starting through his silky skin, proclaims the excellence of his blood, while his bone renders it rather questionable, whether, like some of our noble families, he has not had it strengthened from some source not quite so pure as that of his ancestry.

As she glanced at the well-appointed equipage, she could not help for a moment drawing a comparison between the elegant cabriolet of her lover, and the dislocated tilbury of her humbler companion. It was, however, but the thought of a moment, or only served to remind her of the greater difference between herself and her lover; and Hartley would have been all in all to her, had he possessed no equipage, and nothing but himself and his affections to give her.

Her scarf was now hurriedly and carelessly thrown over her shoulder; her bonnet loosely tied, without even an appeal to the glass; and she rushed to the door. As the clock struck the quarter, however, she paused for a moment;

female pride seemed to have a temporary influence over her, and she determined Hartley should not perceive her impatience.

A few minutes, however, brought her to the carriage, which was carefully drawn up close to the kirb in the quiet of St. James's-square; the ponderous knee-board opened, and the next moment she was seated by the side of her lover, panting with the agitation of pleasure, mingled with the fear of having been seen. The knee-board was closed, Caroline drew the oil-skin curtain, so as to render the concealment a little more effectual, and the steed, obedient to the rein, started at a brisk pace.

A rapid trot of a few miles cleared them from all the dust and incumbrances which the metropolitan roads generally exhibit on a Sunday, and they found themselves in a retired spot with a beautiful country before them.

The horse was now reined in, the oilskin curtain drawn aside, and the calash thrown one fold back, so as to give them air, and a better view of the scenery by which they were surrounded. They had now time for their mutual greetings;

and Hartley was more than usually animated in his expressions of delight at their being together again in all the confidence of mutual intercourse. Caroline blushed, and smiled her sympathy with him in this feeling; and had certainly never looked so beautiful in the eyes of her lover. His presence had driven away all the presentiments by which she had been oppressed, her spirits became exhilarated, she openly expressed the happiness of her heart, and abandoned herself to the innocent enjoyment of the moment.

In Caroline's ideas, the sun had never shone so brilliantly; the sky never looked so bright; the flowers never bloomed so freshly and sweetly as they did on that day. She discovered a thousand beauties in the landscape, which had before escaped her observation; all things took their colour from the complexion of her own mind; and that was so filled with pleasure and happiness, that every thing was "couleur de rose." In this state of enjoyment, they proceeded, chatting, laughing, and sighing by turns; and neither of them regretting the absence of Fanny Thompson, who, with her rheumatic fever, ap-

peared to have been entirely forgotten, till, arriving at the brow of a hill, the horse himself stopped to remind his master that a cabriolet was not a tilbury; and Hartley permitted him to rest, that he and Caroline might enjoy, at their leisure, the beauty of the extensive prospect before them.

It was a lovely day in the commencement of June; the summer sun shone splendidly, and lighted up with its rays the rippling waves of our noble river that flowed majestically in the distance. The cattle had sought a shelter in the shade; every thing bespoke that stillness which is only felt on a summer's day. Nothing living was to be seen except the fly, whose buzzing rather added to than disturbed the repose of the scene; while the new mown hay, strewed lightly over the surrounding meadows, or gathered into cocks, sent a delicious perfume through the air, that stole over the senses with a degree of voluptuousness, which those only can conceive who have experienced its effects.

As Caroline contemplated the scene before her, and felt its calmness; as she looked at the

humble village which lay at their feet, and saw the blue smoke curling and mingling with the clear ether of the atmosphere, as it rose through the patches of plantation in which the cottages were situated; a wish stole over her mind that she could be the inhabitant of one of them with Hartley for her companion. At this wish, and the knowledge of its futility, a sigh escaped her bosom, and her dark eye filled with a tear, which might have found its way down her cheek, had not Hartley stopped it at its source, as lovers sometimes do stop their mistresses tears when they are permitted to do so. Here these lovers seemed as though they could linger for ever; the horse was, however, no lover, and betrayed his impatience to proceed by sundry snortings and pawings; and, on Hartley's representing the real necessity for giving him a few minutes rest and some food, Caroline consented to descend the hill to the village that lay at its foot, instead of immediately turning back agreeably to her first proposition; for she could not bear the idea of distressing a noble animal who performed his duty so well.

In the most beautiful spot of this retired village, a little removed from the rest of the houses, a little inn was designated by the caricature of a lamb which swung backwards and forwards from a high post on the opposite side of the road. It was a neat, white, cottage-looking house, with green verandahs along its front and sides, and the whole displaying an appearance of domestic comfort, that induced them to alight while the horse was taken to the stable to be dressed; an operation which Hartley said was absolutely necessary.

An obsequious, fat, and good-natured landlady ushered them into a parlour at the back part of the inn, which, hanging over a gentle trout stream, commanded one of the prettiest prospects of the surrounding country. This parlour was furnished in a style very far superior to any thing indicated by the outside of the inn. There was almost every luxury which graces a modern drawing-room, although in a rustic form. This was accounted for by the landlady's telling them, that it was used as a fishing house during the season, by some veteran disciples of old Isaac Walton, who valued their comfort as

much as their fishing. The whole had, indeed, such an air of neatness, snugness, and comfort, that it was enough to tempt the stay of any stray traveller who happened to harbour there; and a knowing person would have easily imagined that this was not Hartley's first visit, though he expressed quite as much surprize at the appearance of the place as Caroline herself.

The clock now announced an hour so late, that it was impossible for Caroline to think of getting back in any time for the family dinner, which was always provided in the establishment; and she was at length prevailed upon by Hartley to allow him to order that meal for them there, which the officious landlady promised should be got ready while they took a stroll through the meadows.

This arrangement completed, arm in arm, and sometimes, in the more retired spots, even more familiarly, they wandered for a short delicious hour by the side of the stream that ran through the village; now contemplating the prospect — now anticipating future happiness, though never forgetting the enjoyment of the present. Hartley was more tender, more re-

spectful than usual—Caroline more loving, more confiding. Their hearts seemed wrapped up in each other; and certainly that of Caroline had not another feeling, nor her imagination another thought, but those she experienced for her lover. She hung upon his arm; she listened to his accents; she smiled her approbation of his sprightlier sallies, and her eye suffused with tears, and her cheeks flushed with a maiden's pleasure at his tender protestations; and thus they wandered on, till the signal from the village inn, recalled them to their dinner in the delightful little parlour, rendered still more pleasant, by the murmuring of the stream that rolled its clear waves beneath its windows.

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The moon was shining brightly in the dark blue sky, with its light, now and then, hid by the gossamer clouds that hurried over it, when Hartley's cabriolet was seen slowly returning through one of the green lanes which it had perambulated in the morning. The horse was as prancing and spirited as at the commencement of the journey; but a cloud had come over

the happiness of those whom he was bearing to their homes. Hartley was silent and thoughtful; his face appeared flushed; and he sometimes checked his steed with an impatience that betrayed some internal agitation. Caroline had sunk into the corner of the cabriolet; her face was buried in her handkerchief, and her bosom heaved with convulsive sobs. If for a moment her bashful eye fell upon the clear white light of the moon, she shrunk from it as though ashamed to meet its rays. The passage of the clouds, which created a moment's darkness, seemed a relief. She would then shrinkingly approach Hartley, lay her beating temple on his shoulder, and appear to seek his protection as the only blessing, the only safety left her, in the wide world. A pressure of the hand, or of her head tenderly against his bosom, was the only reply he made to this silent appeal.

As the cabriolet approached town, and as the lamp-lighted streets met her eyes, she sobbed more convulsively; but, by a great effort, overcame her agitation as she drew near her home. At length, the cabriolet stopped; the time of

parting now came; a moment or two elapsed before Caroline could summon sufficient courage to leave the carriage. One convulsive grasp of the hand, and a mutual, scarcely articulated, "God bless you," was all that passed. Strange anomaly! The victim and her destroyer calling down the blessing of the Almighty on each other.

Hartley lashed his steed almost into a gallop. Caroline hurried to the door of her residence. She slid by the servant who admitted her, and stole in darkness to her bed; glad, that the lateness of the hour enabled her to do so, unperceived by her companions, who were long since reposing in sound slumbers fatigued by the pleasures of the day. Here she again gave way to her grief, and wetted her pillow with the bitterest tears that a woman can shed. The clouds had passed away, and the full moon shone brightly into her window upon her sleepless eyes;

But none shall see the day,
When the clouds shall pass away,
Which that dark hour left on the maiden's name.

CHAPTER IX.

VARIOUS.

To know the world we must view society in all its gradations; bashfulness must not exclude us from the high; nor pride prevent our seeking for knowledge among the humble.

MIRROR.

WE can easily imagine, by this time, the blame we are incurring, for expending so many pages upon the story of a milliner. For deserting the annals of the many "comme il faut" people, of whom we profess to give the history, and devoting no less than two or three chapters to the history of a woman, whom, more than two-thirds of our readers may perhaps think but too much honoured by the attentions and pursuit of a man of fashion. The exclusives of one sex are perhaps exclaiming, why what could the woman

expect? and the exquisites of the other, are ridiculing the fastidiousness of Hartley, for making so much fuss about one of those persons, whom they aver to have been created precisely for the fate that has befallen her. Our apology is, however, that in a glance at general society, the low must be described as well as the high; the humble, as well as the proud; the plebeian as well as the patrician. All of them have hearts, feelings, and passions; and those of the lower and middling classes of society are of quite as much consequence to their own happiness, as those of the upper circles are to their own politer pleasures; however they may think to the contrary. It is too much the fashion among a certain rank, to imagine that every thing beneath them is created for their pleasure; that the feelings of the lower orders are to be trampled upon with impunity; and that the actions and passions of people below a certain rank of life, are unworthy of regard, or of record. Yet, from what class of society has been drawn the tales of the deepest feeling; and of the extremity of high-wrought passion?

Certainly not from high life. Society is a mixture; and English society, perhaps, more so than any other. The very constitution of the country makes the mélange the greater; since all ranks, through the medium of their pursuits, their wealth, or their vices, at some period mix together. Where wealth gives aristocracy, and where aristocracy is nothing without it, society can never be completely exclusive. There is no gulph between the noblesse and the canaille; all is in one regular gradation from the highest to the lowest. We should be loth to look to the origin of many, who are figuring away among the first circles of rank and fashion, though we should there find an ample apology for all that we have done in the history of our pretty milliner; for had she possessed the art to have played her cards well, she might, in her turn, perhaps, have elbowed her way up the staircases, and through the saloons of the great, as others, once in her situation, have done before her. But, farewell Caroline Dormer, for a time; we must quit thy humble annals, and return to that society which

has been deserted by us, as well as by Hartley, for your sake.

Lady Orville went on weaving her web, and laying her plans, only to have them rendered abortive by the very persons for whose advantage she intended them. It was in vain that she lectured Lady Sophia. That young lady was willing enough to marry Hartley, because she saw all the advantages of the match. None knew better than she did the merits of fifteen thousand a year, and a peerage in reversion; none appreciated, more than she did, the various appendages of such an income, and such an expectancy. A house in Grosvenor-square, and a place in the country; temporary establishments at Cheltenham in the autumn, and at Brighton in the winter; a box at the opera; a subscription at Almacks; and all the other indispensibles to married happiness, were all duly prized by Lady Sophia; and she knew that she could not be happy without all this; and that an union with Hartley would ensure them. But then, it was too much to give up waltzing with Henry Fitzroy; gallopading with

Lord Henry Mildmay; riding with the guardsmen; and flirting with the Condé di Altemira. Where was the use of being young, handsome, and witty, if she could not be gay, coquetish, and satirical? It was quite unreasonable in Mr. Hartley, or any other Mr. and more particularly of her mamma, who had not yet given up flirting herself, to require that she should resign the common privileges of youth, beauty, and animal spirits.

It was in vain that Lady Orville told her that the privation was only for a time; that the moment the marriage knot was tied, she might flirt, and dance, and ride as much, and with whom she pleased; Lady Sophia saw the advantages, and wished for their enjoyment, but had not courage enough to give up temporary pleasures, for, what her mother called, permanent advantages. Besides, of late, Hartley had always come in just as their parties were breaking up; had quitted them almost immediately; and always appeared perfectly *distrait*. We can account for that, although Lady Sophia could not; and though he was never so agree-

able as a dozen other men she could rank among her admirers, it is true that Hartley might have done very well for a husband, could she have secured him without much trouble; but for an agreeable flirtation, he was, in Lady Sophia's opinion, "toute autre chose."

Thus, Lady Orville saw one of her favourite plans very likely to be thwarted; for she felt but too sensible that, to succeed, Hartley must be completely enthralled, before the establishment of Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley in town. She knew that herself and family would appear in a very different light to Lady Emily, when viewed amidst the pursuits of London, than when merely seen in their annual visit to the Grove; where she had always artfully conformed to Lady Emily's sentiments. She had calculated upon the rapid effect of the new mode of life upon the minds of two such young people, and had depended upon bringing these matches to a conclusion, (so far as the inclinations of the parties were concerned,) before the Hartley family came to London. This event had been delayed by the disinclination that Lady Emily felt again to

embark in the great world, which Lady Orville's bringing out her daughter, had in some measure rendered, for the present, unnecessary.

Such a woman as Lady Orville shrunk from the scrutiny of such a mind as Lady Emily's, and felt the thinness of her veil of artifice before one who had no artifice herself. In London, every one was so occupied in playing their own games, that they had seldom time to detect the play of others; scarcely any one traded openly upon their real motives. The only dependance Lady Orville had, was upon that uprightness of Lady Emily's mind, which would prevent her suspicion of the contrary in another person: thus, like all engaged in a career of vice and deception, tacitly acknowledging the virtue it is preying upon, or plotting against.

As to the Admiral, the ease with which the good old gentleman was misled, had relieved her from many of the difficulties which his presence had at first thrown in the way of her plans; and the idea he had imbibed of Orville's and Emily's love for each other, and of the deception of Forrester, rather tended to facilitate their

union, which would decidedly have been accomplished but for the levity, or something worse, with which Orville treated the whole affair.

The Admiral's expressing his firm conviction of any attachment between the young people to Lady Emily, the Countess knew would go a great way towards accelerating her wishes. The scene, of which he had been a witness in the library, had certainly impressed him with this notion, as far as Orville and Emily were concerned; but not all Lady Orville's assertions could prevail upon him to think the laughing high-spirited Sophia dying with love for Hartley. It was in vain she endeavoured to prove that these spirits were forced, to conceal the real sentiments of her heart, from the fear of their not being mutual. The Admiral knew something about the "the worm in the bud," "but," as he said, "concealment did not seem to prey on the damask cheek;" and he could not reconcile the dashing careless ease, and glow of full health which characterized Sophia's person and manner, with his ideas of a lovesick damsel; neither could he conceive the necessity

of waltzing with a dozen men at night, riding with a dozen others in the morning, and flirting with every one who came in her way, even to the old gentleman himself, for the mere purpose of concealing a passion, which her mother asserted was secretly preying upon her heart, and undermining her health and spirits.

Lady Orville would have had her daughter counterfeit a little appearance of the lovesick maiden, to have deceived the Admiral; but if she ever attempted this, her naturally boisterous and satirical disposition had entirely spoiled the effect.

Thus were her favourite schemes counteracted by the very persons to whom she naturally looked as coadjutors; and she even now began to doubt the accomplishment of the marriage between her son and Emily, from the circumstance of his becoming so much more careless of preserving the influence he had evidently attained over her mind.

The fact was, that Orville was one of those persons upon whose minds a fancy acts with the force of a passion. Two or three times in his

life, this feeling or caprice had been excited in so great a degree, as to induce him to give up every other pursuit until the prevailing fancy was gratified; and he was now thus influenced by the fancy which he had taken for his fair incognita. He had spoken to Mrs. Langley but for a few minutes, but he had been so struck by her demeanour; and by her beauty of that peculiar style that he admired the most, that, unused to control his passions or baulk his fancy, he determined to leave nothing untried to gratify the inclination she had excited. Tadpole's having seen Forrester enter the house, gave him some notion that he was in some way connected with her history; and the idea of again rivalling him, gave a perverse zest to his pursuit.

All the information which the convenient Tadpole could gain was, that Mrs. Roberts, the name by which Langley was known at his lodgings, led a very retired life; that her *husband* (a particular stress laid upon this word by Tadpole, so as to give a doubt as to the correctness of the title) quitted her every morning, and never

returned till very late at night; generally, indeed, after the household had retired to rest. That his manners and address were very superior to those of the good lady's other inmates, and not at all like a common second-floor lodger's. But not one word could Tadpole make out detrimental to her character, or at all indicative of any levity of conduct, that could induce Orville to suppose that any open addresses would be received. His notions of women were, however, formed by the worst of those with whom he associated: and as some political philosopher has said that "every man had his price;" so was it Orville's creed, that every woman was to be won, only attack her in the right way. Indeed, his estimation of the sex in general was at so low an ebb, that he used to say with the poet, that

> ——— "Gifts and giving,
> Will melt the chastest-seeming female living."

We must, however, leave Orville to his pursuits, and look a little after some other of the Dramatis Personæ, who have figured in our former chapters, and whom we are half afraid our readers may have forgotten. It must be re-

collected that, not professing to depict those immaculate heroes and heroines, who form the principal interest of novel readers, but rather to give a general view of mankind as they are; and a somewhat enlarged, though desultory view of society, as it is constituted; our drama must consist of a number of personages; and we are compelled to make up in quantity, what our heroes may want in quality. The fact is, we wish to give a history of society more than that of one man; and to detail the common events that occur in the routine of every day life, rather than those "soul stirring" incidents, those "perils of flood and field," which in general throw their interest over the pages of the modern novelist. We wish our pages to have the power of the kaleidescope, or cosmorama, and to present a different picture with the turn of every page.

The Countess of Orville's difficulties and dilemmas, did not, however, arise solely from her unmarried children; she now began to conceive real uneasiness as to the conduct of her married daughter Lady Olivia Tressel; whom, in a

former chapter, she described in her letter to her divorcée friend, as "shaking her matrimonial chains rather too vehemently."

It may be recollected by some of my readers, that in the early part of our history, Mrs. Woodville was very nearly becoming a sacrifice to the temptations held out by Lady Orville; but that she was rescued from the trammels into which too high play had led her, by a timely appeal to her husband; by which the schemes of Lady Orville and Sir Henry Warrington were rendered abortive.

The motives for the Countess' hatred to Mrs. Woodville, and of her vindictive feeling to her husband, had arisen from circumstances which few women forgive. Woodville had been a slave of her own, till the attractions of Louisa Carlton had broken the spell by which she had for a moment enthralled his passions; and, by becoming his wife, obtained a legitimate claim to that heart and those feelings which Lady Orville had determined to consider as devoted to herself.

The consequences of this, in such a mind as

hers, may be easily conceived by those who have any knowledge of woman's human nature. She well knew that in Woodville's constitutional inconstancy she should ultimately find sufficient to revenge her on his wife; but, not content with that, she determined to tempt her into a course that might terminate in a dishonor, that should also give her a triumphal vengeance over even the cold-hearted Woodville.

Mrs. Woodville had, however, been too near the precipice not to perceive its horrors; and every subsequent attempt on the part of the Countess was rendered abortive by her prudence, and by her grateful remembrance of the apparent generosity with which her difficulties had been relieved by her husband.

Disappointed, in this, and at length hopeless of accomplishing the dishonor of Woodville through the ruin of his wife; she determined to do her utmost to prevent any thing like a return of conjugal happiness between them, by detaching Woodville more and more from his home, by the various attractions which she purposely laid in his way. To induce the

renewal of his intimacy at Orville House, she took care to invite all those to whom this volatile being was in the habit of devoting his attentions; and the unfortunate disposition of such a heartless man but too well aided the Countess in her purpose.

As if Providence, however, had decreed that Lady Orville's manœuvres for the destruction of others should be turned against herself; and that she should be destined to thwart her own purposes by her own schemes; it was during this period that Woodville met Lady Olivia Tressel at Orville House, and it was not long before a very strong flirtation was "got up," between a disappointed wife and a profligate husband. Lady Olivia inherited a great portion of her mother's passionate feelings; but in early life they had been so tempered by the softness of her heart and the natural goodness of her disposition, that, had she wedded the man of her affections, she had most probably made an exemplary wife and an affectionate mother. Taught, however, that a good establishment was the main end of matrimony, and ambition a

passion more to be gratified than love; she was half persuaded, half forced, to give up an early attachment to a young officer in the Guards, and to consent to a marriage with a wealthy East Indian three times her age, a part of whose immense fortune was destined to free the Orville estates from the various incumbrances of mortgages, annuities, &c. by which more than half of its rental had been swallowed up.

At eighteen, it was no wonder that her young mind was dazzled by the splendid equipages of her wealthy admirer, and by the establishments and pin-money that were promised her. Lady Orville vaunted the Nabob's heart and his house, his worth and his wealth, his ingenuousness and his India bonds, in the same breath. Olivia's dreams of love and a cottage were left to slumber amidst the nursery tales of Red Riding Hood and Goody Two Shoes, and she became, instead of the presiding deity of some such humble residence, the mistress of a magnificent mansion in Portland-place, the lady of some five or six manors in the country, and the wife of their incumbrance, Mr. Regulus Tressel, whom she

vowed "to love, honour, and obey, till death did them part," not caring how soon this divorcer upon the grand scale, would take possession of her better half, and leave her to the quiet enjoymant of her splendid settlement.

The deserted lover cursed the fickleness of woman, and exchanging into a West India regiment, soon fell a victim to the climate; inflicting another pang, in addition to those, which Lady Olivia's yielding inconstancy had already entailed upon herself.

A few months experience, and a little more knowledge of life, soon opened her eyes to the selfish motives of her mother and brother; the jointure of the one, and the estates of the other, having been freed from all incumbrance by her marriage; a circumstance, of which the ungenerous disposition of her husband never failed to remind her upon any little conjugal disagreement, and, with such different dispositions, these disagreements were both many and frequent.

The wish for a noble alliance, and the beauty of Lady Olivia, had for a moment overcome the

natural character of Mr. Tressel's mind; but a very short time served to open the eyes of his wife to the sordid temper of the man she had condemned herself to call husband. The splendour of his establishment was the effect of vanity more than hospitality; prodigally selfish, he was meanness itself, in his conduct with regard to others. His whole life had been a contest between his avarice and his vanity; while his long residence in the East, and his having been habituated to purchased attendance, had imbued his conduct to his inferiors with a tyranny, which was only equalled by his obsequious servility to his superiors. This tyranny he would have extended to his wife, and imagined that he could soon impress a girl of eighteen with such ideas of his consequence as would ensure him a ready obedience to all his wishes. In this, however. he soon found himself mistaken. The mind that might have been led by kindness, was roused to resistance by the appearance of command.

Two or three circumstances had created in Olivia a thorough contempt for her sordid husband; and her's was a temper which did not

long conceal this contempt from the knowledge of the person by whom it was inspired. It was in vain that Tressel appealed to the Countess, and asked, "where was all the meekness of disposition which had been so much vaunted before she became his wife." That lady could only recommend patience and indulgence; and, when Tressel contemplated his own yellow face, and attenuated form, looking, in the splendid mirrors in his drawing-room, like a perambulating illustration of a liver complaint, and contrasted them with the healthy cheek, sparkling eyes, and symmetrical figure of his wife, he trembled to pursue his plan of subjugation, as he reflected on the revenge which she had in her power.

How often did he wish she had the deformity of a hag, or that some friendly small-pox would take from her the power of her beauty; his wishes were useless, and he was condemned daily to see his wife increase in loveliness, while his own face and form became daily a greater contrast to her charms. When the stentorian lungs of the footman would announce, Mr. and Lady Olivia Tressel, how, as he entered the drawing-

room, would he shrink from the comparison which he felt an internal consciousness was forming between them in the minds of every person present; while she seemed to shake him from her arm, as a no longer necessary incumbrance, the moment that the announcement of what she always called his odious name was over.

Thoroughly disgusted with her husband, she took very little pains to conceal her sentiments; and her eyes, opened to the motives of her mother and brother, every thing like filial or fraternal affection became eradicated, and she merely lived with them upon the terms of common acquaintanceship. She soon saw her power over the fears of her husband, and reserved it in her own hands to inflict the heavy pang of jealousy whenever he ventured to remonstrate against any of her extravagancies. She had married for wealth, and she was determined to have every enjoyment that wealth could procure; she was determined to have the price for which she had sold herself, to the uttermost farthing; to be a very Shylock in her bond. The pride and passions of her heart overcame or closed up its softer dispositions, and she sought in dissipa-

tion, and a perpetual round of fashionable pleasure, to deaden all the bitterness with which she regretted having married a man she could not love. By these means her mind was kept in a state of perpetual excitement, and it was during this period that she was thrown a great deal into the society of Woodville, who, attracted by her beauty, soon gave her all that he ever gave to a woman, that admiration of her charms which induced him to wish for their possession. Woodville was an experienced seducer. He knew all the weaknesses of the sex; whether they arose from pride, disappointment, envy, or affection. He could flatter and feed their passions, and at the same time imitate an ardour that would have deceived the most rusée into an idea of the reality of his attachment. He saw, under all the imperious demeanour of Lady Olivia, a vacancy of heart—a *besoin d'aimer*—a fund of passion, which it required but an experienced hand to set in a blaze. He perceived the real tenderness of her disposition, under the pride and indifference with which her conduct was generally marked; and he knew that the independance of mind, which she inherited from her mother,

without that Lady's experience in its concealment, would, more than any thing, further a purpose which had in view the subversion of any received opinions of a society she was too much inclined to despise.

In Woodville, Lady Olivia found the first man who had reminded her heart of the sentiments it had experienced for the object of her earliest love; she understood, from his hints, that he was united to a woman of a cold disposition, bigotted to the bienscéances of society, without sentiment, feeling, or passion—and she pitied him. He became the confidante of her own history, of her contempt for the partner of her life; he consoled her by his professions of friendship and sympathy—and she loved him. The society, in which they both mingled, afforded plenty of opportunities for their meeting, and for the encouragement of this growing inclination. But Woodville himself was scarcely aware of the violence of those passions which he was exciting. His attentions were so open, and her pleasure in their reception so conspicuous, that they soon became the talk of society. Scandal began to spread its hundred whispers; and exaggerated

statements, and false conclusions, as usual, were the result. Conscious of her own rectitude, and careless of opinion, Lady Olivia still continued to meet him in her box at the Opera—to attend to no one else, either at her own, or other parties, where they met; and seemed anxious to *afficher* rather than conceal what gave her such evident pleasure. These rumours were not long in reaching the ears of Lady Orville; who, from the moment it was pointed out, perceived the truth of what was mentioned only as surmise, and trembled for her daughter. Lady Orville did not tremble for the virtue of Lady Olivia—she did not tremble for the crime in which her imprudence might terminate; but she trembled for the consequences of an exposé to which her carelessness might lead; and she knew full well the influence of any discovered faux pas of the one daughter would have on the establishment of the other. Wherever, therefore, she could do so without appearing too particular, and thus rendering the affair more public, she separated them at parties, and generally contrived to pass her opera evenings in Lady Olivia's box, in spite of the almost rude hints that she received

that her presence was considered as an intrusion. Woodville found an additional delight in paying his attentions to Lady Olivia, the moment he perceived how annoying they were to Lady Orville, whom he never forgave, for, what he half-suspected, as an attempt upon his own wife; and, as old Seneca says, "even the greatest libertine expects his own wife to be honest."

Lady Olivia did not, on her part, perceive the precipice on which she stood. She gave way to her friendship for Woodville, and designated it, as she believed it to be, platonic; but she did not perceive how much more intolerable her marriage had become since the commencement of her intercourse with him; or how much more she hated her husband since she had contrasted him with Woodville. No thought, however, of infidelity to her marriage vows, had crossed her mind: Woodville himself, though he spoke of his love, spoke of it as hopeless, and only with a regret that they had not known each other in earlier life, when the hand and heart were free, and might have been bestowed upon each other.

By such insidious hints he artfully led her on, inflamed her passions, and at length inspired her with a love which, in such a bosom as her's, might lead to any result that Woodville pleased.

But Woodville was deliberate in his villainy; he had roused a mind of which he himself was somewhat afraid, and, ardently as his own inclinations were engaged, he wished for their gratification without an exposé which he foresaw would lead to many disagreeable consequences to himself. He paused, therefore, in his pursuit.

Oh! woman! why was it not given you to look into the selfishness of man's heart. What a world of misery might such a power not have saved! How strange that the sex will learn nothing but from their own experience; and that the experience of others should never deter them. A woman always thinks herself exempt—always imagines that a special case has been made out for her preservation, though she knows and hears of the fall of hundreds under similar circumstances.

CHAPTER X.

A MOTHER AND DAUGHTER.

Mama mia, non mi gridate.—Ital. Song.

Oh dear Inopholus!
Let heaven and earth forget there are such things.
Ford.

Vice is essentially selfish—Passion, even erring passion, may be tinctured by sentiments of generosity which give a species of nobleness to its nature; and nine times out of ten, a woman's fall is more attributable to that generosity which cannot bear a lover's pain, than to the gratification of her own inclinations. The idea of making the man she loves happy, induces her to forget how much she loses by the step she is taking, and it is by this idea that she is misled, more than by any vicious pro-

pensity of her own nature. And yet these are the creatures that we sacrifice—these are the sanctuaries that we violate—these the minds we pollute. Well, well! it was always the same; and will be the same, so long as human nature exists. But that vice, which is not the mere effect of temporary impulse and overpowering passion, but the result of an ill-turned mind, and a vicious heart, is the most selfish of all human feelings.

Lady Orville's care was not for her daughter, but for herself. She knew that the conduct of Lady Olivia must, in some measure, reflect upon her mother; and she dreaded any éclat that might recall recollections long since dead, and rumours long since forgotten.

With these fears, she watched the conduct of her daughter and Woodville very narrowly. All she wished to inculcate was prudence; and this quality her daughter certainly wanted in an eminent degree. Actual guilt might have taught it her: this Lady Orville knew, and could almost have wished that even such a master might teach her daughter the prudence

of concealment. Sometimes she formed the idea of enlightening Mr. Tressel himself upon the subject; but, independently of the very little influence he possessed in his own household, she was too well aware of the violent passions of Lady Olivia, to venture upon such a step.

At length, matters proceeded to such an extremity of imprudence, that she determined upon speaking to her daughter herself, and to inculcate the necessity for concealment, if she could not effect any other change in her conduct with regard to Woodville.

With the sentiments with which Lady Orville had for a long time viewed this gentleman, it cannot be imagined that these circumstances tended to lessen the hatred she bore him.

It was some time before Lady Orville could rally sufficient courage to carry her intention of remonstrating with Lady Olivia into effect. She was conscious how little of filial love and respect was due to her from her daughter, and how much of the present circumstances was attributable to herself. What a state of mind, for a

mother, to be afraid of recalling her daughter to a sense of her duty! And yet how many are in the same situation, from the examples they have set, and from the manner with which the morals of their children have been neglected?

At length, however, Lady Orville summoned resolution, and drove to Portland-place. The porter said his mistress was at home, and the Countess, with the privilege of the mother of the lady of the mansion, pursued her way to Lady Olivia's boudoir; she could not, however, but perceive that there was an evident uneasiness in the manner with which her daughter's footman of the interior preceded her to the door of the apartment, and a most unusual bustle previous to her announcement; neither, could she help observing the blush of disappointment that clouded her daughter's features at her entrance, or the glance of anger that was cast at the footman. Lady Orville almost started, as she saw Woodville himself hanging over Lady Olivia, who was seated at her harp, and turning over the leaves of her music book, as though she had been playing; though certainly no

sound of music had been heard in her approach. Too well-bred, however, to exhibit any signs of surprise, after the usual morning greetings to her daughter, she "trusted dear Mrs. Woodville was well; expressed her concern to hear she was otherwise, and her surprise at not having seen her for so long a time." This was done with a malicious intention, and it succeeded in the annoyance she projected; for the mention of Woodville's wife evidently jarred both upon his and Lady Olivia's feelings at that moment. Throwing herself upon the sofa, she expressed her intention of passing a long morning at Portland-place; at which, significant glances were exchanged between her daughter and Woodville, the former of whom could scarcely conceal her vexation. Woodville was too much a man of the world to be put out by such a trifling contre-temps as this; he, therefore, chatted easily upon indifferent subjects, and, finding that Lady Orville's determination was not likely to change, shortly took his leave.

As the door closed behind him, Lady Orville begged her daughter not to be at home to any

body else, as she wished for some conversation with her alone.

"Those orders were given very early this morning," replied Lady Olivia; "but really our servants are so inattentive that I shall change them." This sentence was uttered with a manner quite as ungracious as the matter of it was significantly rude; but Lady Orville took no notice of the insinuation it was meant to convey, and only cast about in her mind the most effectual manner of introducing and treating the matter upon which she came. At length, plunging at once into the subject, Lady Orville observed—

"Mr. Woodville seems a very constant visitor of late, Olivia."

Lady Olivia blushed with a feeling between shame and anger, as she replied, "Not more constant than was agreeable to herself and Mr. Tressel."

"And is it quite as agreeable to Mr. Tressel that he should be so perpetually your companion in the park, and your guest in your box at the opera?" asked Lady Orville.

"Really," answered her daughter, with a slight toss of her head, "I do not think it necessary to ask Mr. Tressel's opinion, or to consult his pleasure upon every chance companion I may ride with, or upon every visitor whom I may admit to my box,"

"But my love," resumed Lady Orville, "is it quite prudent to make Mr. Woodville's attentions so conspicuous?"

"Let those," retorted Lady Olivia, "consult prudence who are conscious that their conduct requires concealment. For my part, I despise it, and defy any thing that the world may say."

The Countess bit her lip till the blood almost came at the evident allusion to herself, that this speech was meant to convey; she, however, quietly replied to it by saying, "Do not mistake me, my love, in supposing for a moment that I attribute any intention to Mr. Woodville beyond those which he has a right to pay as an occasional guest of Mr. Tressel's, or that you have a right to receive, as his hostess. But there are busy tongues in the world that will invent a mischief which does not exist, and pro-

pagate that as truth, which is only the result of their own evil imaginations."

"The world may do and say what it pleases, madam," said Lady Olivia; "but you will not find me sufficiently weak-minded, to be frightened out of the few pleasures existence presents to my enjoyment by the breath of scandal, or by the tongue of malice." This was uttered in a determined tone that almost showed Lady Orville the uselessness of remonstrance.

"I did not speak, my love," proceeded Lady Orville, "of your giving up Mr. Woodville; though, knowing him, as I do know him, and being so much aware of his principles, as I am, I should have said, as a mother, that it would be more conducive to your happiness to do so."

A flash of indignation crossed Lady Olivia's countenance, as she repeated the word "mother," and heard Lady Orville's allusion to her knowledge of Woodville.

"It is not, I say, Olivia, that you need absolutely give up Mr. Woodville; but, indeed, my love, there is a necessity for more prudence in your conduct with him. You may enjoy his

conversation and society without letting the world always see you in the same carriage and in the same box; the world will talk, and I would have your name free from the tarnish of its scandal."

"My name! And what, madam, can any one say against my name? They may know that I bear it unwillingly, for I do not attempt to conceal it. They may know that I was deceived into taking it; because I cannot but feel that such was the case, and I generally speak as I feel."

"Nay, my love; what woman of your rank commands a more splendid establishment?"

"Has that splendid establishment established my happiness?" asked Lady Olivia.

"Who is there that has the same power with yourself to follow your inclinations?" reiterated Lady Orville.

"The meanest creature that begs his bread, or, what is worse, earns it from the great and proud, has more power to follow his inclinations than I have," said Lady Olivia; "and as

my carriage rolls past the very laborers in the street, I envy their condition and their freedom."

"Nay, nay, Olivia, this is folly; you are excited; I come not to lessen your pleasures; I come not to put a tyrannical curb upon your innocent inclinations; but when rumour is busy, I have thought it my duty as a mother to inculcate prudence."

"Your duty as a mother!" interrupted Lady Olivia. "Oh, madam! was it your duty as a mother to force me into the arms of a man you knew I must loathe as a husband? was it your duty as a mother, to sell me to this sordid wretch, to whom I have sworn love and fidelity, for the purpose of freeing my brother's estate and your jointure from its incumbrances, by the sacrifice of my future happiness? was it your duty as a mother to deceive me into a situation, where my inclinations could never coincide with my duty; and where I was sure to meet with temptations at every turn to swerve from it?"

"Olivia, I did the best for you that a mother's care could suggest. Mr. Tressel was

courted as the husband of girls, even your superiors in rank."

"Then, I wish to God, madam, you had permitted him to have been their husband. Born in different climes, nearly as far asunder as the antipodes—almost in a different age—I should have considered that nature and circumstances had placed a barrier to the union, which your avarice and ambition has accomplished between this sordid man and my wretched self."

Here Lady Olivia raised her voice to such a pitch that the Countess closed the double doors which led to the apartment; and, herself almost alarmed at the state of indignant feeling she had raised, she attempted, by every soothing means in her power, to allay the irritation of her daughter. But it was in vain, Lady Olivia's passions were in a blaze; her long pent up feelings had at length broken down the barrier which custom and decorum had placed between their relative situations as mother and daughter, and rushed out with an impetuosity which nothing could stop.

"You talk of prudence, madam; prudence to a woman whom you have made mad; why not

have inculcated it in my youth? why not have placed a gentle curb, by precept and example, upon passions which you have given me, without giving me the power to control them? The stream which is easily stemmed at its source becomes irresistible in its current."

"Hold, Olivia, hold! Remember you are speaking to your mother," said Lady Orville, resuming her self-command, and speaking with something like the authority of a parent.

"I wish I could forget it, and I wish still more bitterly that you had yourself never forgotten that you were so; but, madam, you have sold the authority which the sacred title of mother gave you over me—have sold it to a wretch whom I despise, and who perpetually taunts me with the price he has paid for me. Can you wonder that the sight of him should make me shrink from those who placed me in his power?"

"But, Olivia, you have still many pleasures in store."

"And where must I seek them?—in CRIME! Mother, leave me to myself; my passions at present hurry me beyond my reason; I know and feel that I stand upon a precipice, and I cannot

forget who placed me there;" and so saying, she quitted the room before Lady Orville had time to stop her, and heard her shut and lock the door of her dressing-room with violence, before she had any power to follow her.

What the Countess of Orville's feelings were at that moment, we must leave to the imagination of the many parents who have sacrificed their daughters in the same manner at the shrines of wealth and vanity.

Let those who are hurrying the inexperience of their children into ill-assorted matches, pause ere the sacrifice is completed. Let them analyse the histories of those unhappy records of broken vows and nuptial infidelity, which our Courts of Law daily present to our observation; and how many of these instances may be traced to marriages formed for the convenience of family arrangements, instead of from the impulse of rational affection! and let them turn aside from the purpose that would throw another chance into the scale of temptation and of crime.

CHAPTER XI.

RIVALS.

Ecoutez moi, respectable Emilie;
Vous êtes belle : ainsi donc la moitié
Du genre humain sera votre ennemie.
—— votre simple amitié
Est confiante; et vous serez trahie.

VOLTAIRE.

Of all the miserable lives that are led in this world of ours, there is scarcely any to compare with that of a lover. I do not mean, of one of those namby pamby lovers, whose affections are skin-deep, and whose vows are lip deep — who make love *selon les regles*, and get over a refusal by a trip to the Continent — or forget a disappointment in the arms of a mistress. No! no! these are not lovers: but let the heart once be completely engaged, let the mind once fix its

only hope of happiness on a woman, and I defy any one to point out a man in the world, who, even under the most fortunate circumstances, is not doomed to endure more miseries than those of Tantalus, in the suspense, uncertainty, and caprice which he will have to encounter.

Women, why or wherefore it is difficult to define, seem to triumph as much in the misery they can inflict, as in the happiness they have it in their power to bestow; and to judge of the strength of a man's affection, by the agonies he endures, more than by the pleasures he enjoys. As to a hackney coach horse, which I take to be about as miserable a creature as exists in this very merciful world, its life is a mere sinecure in comparison with that of a lover. His fare finished, he takes his place on the stand, and munches his oats out of his nosebag in peace and quietness. But a lover, "God save the mark!" his fair never lets him rest; if she loves him, she teazes him with her caprices and her jealousies; if she is uncertain of her sentiments, she leads him on and on in uncertainty and suspense till she has made up her mind, and perhaps discards him at

the very moment he expects the acceptance of his vows; and if, from the first, she cannot return his affection, female vanity cannot resist the temptation of showing off her conquest, and leading her lover, like a Roman conqueror, to swell the number of captives in her train, and rattle his chains to the tune of her caprice.

Oh woman! woman! when will you cease to find pleasure in torturing the hearts that love you? What a volume of vituperation could an author pour forth upon this subject—what pages of remonstrance—what chapters of advice! But where would be the use of them: women would still be the same. In this disposition, at any rate, they are unchangeable; however variable they may be on other points:

> —— Oh! I know women's hearts
> What stuff they 're made of.

We may therefore as well spare our ink and our readers, and take the world as it goes, and leave women to their ways.

Poor Forrester, at any rate, felt the agonies of a lover to be not merely imaginary — tortured by suspense, the certainty of Emily's

change was almost more than he could endure. He did, however, endure it, and with a manly firmness that deserved a better fate. Certain at length of the futility of his hopes, and of the loss of his own happiness, he crushed the agonizing though selfish feelings of his bosom, and turned his thoughts to the happiness of her he loved so truly; and felt a pang at the danger which threatened her peace of mind, almost as great as that which he had experienced at the destruction of his own.

He saw how Emily was dazzled by the brilliant attentions of Lord Orville, and, knowing that nobleman's principles and actions with regard to women, he trembled lest she was following an ignis fatuus that would lead her to destruction. Not that Forrester for a moment dreamt of Lord Orville's success in any dishonourable intention; but he dreaded the enthralment of Emily's affections by one who was notoriously not a marrying man.

He saw that any warning which he hinted to Emily herself was attributed to jealousy. He dreaded creating unhappiness in the breast of

Mr. and Lady Emily Hartley too much to venture to disturb their serenity by his fears, and he found her brother too much in the trammels of Orville's temptations to hope any thing from him. Yet he saw Emily standing on the brink of a precipice; on the point of giving her best affections to a man whom he knew to be heartless; and, cruelly as she had treated him, he could not endure the idea of leaving her to the chance of such a fate as might be reserved for her, should she love him, and find her love unreturned. In the midst of all his sufferings, Forrester had never blamed Emily: he saw the effect of the new life she was leading upon her young mind — he perceived the arts and blandishments by which she was surrounded — he confessed his own inferiority to the other competitors for her favour, and he considered the change which had taken place in her heart but natural, and found a thousand excuses for that which had destroyed his happiness.

At length, Forrester determined on an appeal to Lord Orville himself: as an old acquaintance and fellow collegian, he thought that he

might request some explanation of his intentions; and as a friend of the Hartley family, he felt it his duty to make some struggle to preserve Emily from such a fate as he feared might await her, should Lord Orville have no serious meaning in the attentions he paid her. To do this he was sensible would require great command both of his temper and his feelings; but the recollection of his motives, and the hope that the result might be beneficial to Emily, enabled him to conquer both, and arguing himself into a frame of mind proper for such an extraordinary interview, he sought Lord Orville.

Orville was in his library writing billet-doux, on papers as various in their colours as the mistresses to whom they were addressed were in their character and dispositions; for he was one of those heartless beings, a man of general intrigue, without a feeling for any one woman in particular. Orville's fancy had been the only feeling that had as yet ever been excited by the other sex; he was too thoroughly selfish to be capable of that generosity which is the never-failing characteristic of true affection.

Emily's beauty and innocence had perhaps made a deeper impression on his mind than any woman had yet done; the contrast of her artlessness with the *rusé* manners of those to whom he had been accustomed, gave the zest of novelty to her attractions; and the idea of successfully rivalling his old friend Forrester added to the gratification he felt in knowing that he was not viewed by her with indifference.

The fact was, that Orville disliked the straight-forward character of Forrester, which he considered a satire upon his own; and he was angry that he could not *feel* that contempt for him, which he was anxious to show to others, by the badinage with which he always treated him. He easily saw that Forrester's whole soul was wrapped up in Emily; that he had given her his best affections — that his sole hope of happiness rested upon her; and he gloried in being the means of overturning this hope, without any serious intentions of profiting himself by the change which he hoped to work in Emily's affections. The increased seriousness of Forrester's countenance and tone of voice as he

entered the library, could not fail to attract the attention of Lord Orville, as they exchanged the customary salutations of the morning, which were immediately succeeded by Forrester's requesting Lord Orville's serious attention for a few moments.

"Serious attention!" exclaimed Orville. "If I am to be so contrary to my nature as to be serious, I am glad, Forrester, that you have limited the period of my gravity to a few minutes. You sententious moralists really expect such light-minded mortals as myself to imitate your gravity."

This tone of badinage jarred upon Forrester's feelings, and in some measure disconcerted him. He began likewise to feel that he had no ostensible authority to require the explanation he was about to demand. Conscious, however, of the rectitude of his intentions, and his certainty of Emily's danger being increased by the number of notes, evidently to and from women, that strewed the desk that was open before Orville, and which he was now closing, preparatory to his conversation with Forrester; he derived fresh courage, and proceeded.

"I am afraid, my Lord, that my plain and blunt manners will very little assimilate with those by which you are so constantly addressed; yet I trust you will look through the surface of my conduct to its motives, and find a sufficient apology in them."

"Oh the prudent Forrester's conduct can never need any apology in the eyes of such a giddy fellow as myself; except, indeed, that its wisdom is, perhaps, too strong a satire upon the folly of my own," said Lord Orville.

"For once, my Lord, I pray a truce to your badinage. Let it suffice that you triumph in it when others are present to appreciate your wit and my deficiency. I wish to put a plain question, and shall be obliged if you will honor me with a direct, and, if possible, a decisive answer," said Forrester, with added earnestness, and increasing agitation, as he approached the subject upon which, in his mind, so much depended.

"Question! question!" cried Lord Orville, imitating that cry in the House of Commons; "an appeal to the Lords, I declare."

This unfeeling continuance of the same tone almost roused Forrester's indignation; but, feeling how much depended on keeping his temper, he restrained his feelings, and hastily said, "Will your lordship have the kindness to inform me whether your intentions are serious with regard to Miss Hartley?"

Lord Orville affected to start although he had been perfectly aware of the nature of the question Forrester was about to put. Then, in a tone of coxcombry, he proceeded, "Serious?—why, really, I have scarcely ever taken the trouble to analyse any of my intentions with regard to women. I generally leave these things to the 'march of circumstances,' as political writers would call it—"

"Nay,—nay, my Lord—pray answer me—I entreat you—for your attentions are too evident not to be directed by your own will. I feel it to be a plain, perhaps a blunt, question; and I again refer you to my motives as its apology."

"Well then, Forrester," said Orville, "to adopt your own style of gravity, will you tell me by what authority you ask me this plain

question?" A pause ensued; when Lord Orville proceeded: "Am I to answer you as a lover and a rival?"

"No, no!" hastily replied Forrester; "as neither. All ideas of rivalry are past. I come not as a rival; I come not as a lover; for I must be both without a hope of success. That I have loved Miss Hartley—ardently, sincerely, loved her—is known to her family—herself—and to the world; but I have exerted my endeavours, and have reduced my feelings to those of friendship."

"Very prudently done; and worthy of the philosophical Forrester," observed Lord Orville, with an approving nod.

"It is that friendship," proceeded Forrester, "which induces my present visit. Miss Hartley's happiness is my object; and though my hopes of constituting that happiness have vanished, my warmest wishes for its existence, and my determination to preserve it, still remain."

"And what, in the name of wonder, do you dread from me?" asked Lord Orville, half superciliously.

"I dread," replied Forrester, "that Miss Hartley's inexperience in the world, and ignorance of your character, may attribute your evident attentions to other motives than the real ones, and that she may construe the elegance of a compliment into an expression of affection. I dread, lest the sensibility of her heart may be aroused by these attentions, before she is herself aware of it; and, should they be unmeaning, I know those sensibilities to be sufficiently acute to render her miserable, perhaps for ever."

"Mr. Forrester," said Lord Orville, gravely, "you now compel me to be serious. Once for all, the moment I understand the capacity in which you question me, I may, perhaps, be induced to answer you. If you demand it as a rival—"

"That, my Lord," interrupted Forrester, "I have already denied—for, ill directed indeed, is that passion which can make the object of its love the subject of a public dispute. I despise the man whose arguments lie in a bullet; and whose word is only sustained at the point of the sword. No! were it any other man than your-

self, Lord Orville, under the supposition that you were preferred, I should relinquish my hopes, and retire without a question."

"But with me?" was an interrogatory rather looked than asked by Orville.

"With you," pursued Forrester, "it is different. For, without any hope of ultimate success in a dishonorable intention, you are not satisfied without inspiring a passion which can never be honorably gratified, and from which you can derive no benefit, but the useless—and allow me to say—unmanly knowledge of your own power."

"A very Seneca, I declare! a second Daniel come to judgment. Why, Forrester, you are a walking philanthropist."

"And, can you," continued Forrester, "for the unsatisfactory gratification of a selfish vanity, risk the destruction of the happiness of such a being as Emily Hartley?"

"The destruction of her happiness! Nothing is farther from my intention, I assure you, than the *destruction* of Miss Hartley's happiness. But why should I not be selfish. It is the prin-

ciple of mankind; self is the universal axis on which every thing turns; and I hate singularity," said Lord Orville.

"Nay, nay, my Lord, degrade not our nature to so low an ebb. There are feelings of generosity in our hearts, which raise us above the level on which you would place us; but mere selfishness is right earth, for earth alone stands fast on its own center; all things that have affinity with the heavens move round the center of another—"

"My selfishness has then an affinity with the heavens," retorted Lord Orville; "for woman is its center of attraction, and I revolve around it."

"But the bodies to which the philosopher alludes," replied Forrester, "revolve upon the center of others to benefit—you, to destroy them."

At this moment, the door of the library opened, and Emily herself, the object of this discussion, entered the room, with a book in her hand, as though for the purpose of changing a volume. She started at seeing Orville and For-

rester, and would have retired, stammering some apology about expecting to find the room unoccupied. Lord Orville, however, advanced towards her, and, preventing her retreat, said, "Nay, Miss Hartley, you must not leave us; you are just come in time to thank your knight-errant, who, like the hero of La Mancha, has been defending you against the dangers which his own imagination has created."

Forrester, greatly agitated, attempted to stop Lord Orville, who continued, however, in spite of him—

"Oh, it would be mere selfishness—right earth, you know—to keep the arguments of your gallantry to myself, and to prevent their reaching that heavenly body they were intended to benefit. Here, Miss Hartley, has Forrester been combating the attentions which my heart, and your own attractions have induced me to pay you as my mother's guest, with as much fury, and as little justice, as Don Quixote attacked the windmills, or the harmless sheep."

"Insidious coxcomb!" trembled on the lips

of the agitated Forrester; but the presence of Emily restrained him.

"Mr. Forrester," exclaimed Emily, with heightened colour, and a half-haughty tone; "after what has passed; after what I have also heard of your conduct; you must be conscious that this interference with my name is officious, at least, to give no harsher term to it."

"Oh, Miss Hartley," replied Forrester, "torture me not by expressions, as undeserved, as they are harsh and agonizing. I have been influenced, and Lord Orville knows it, only by my wishes for your honour and happiness."

"I can preserve them both, Sir, without the assistance of Mr. Forrester," said Emily, coldly.

"Heaven grant you may!" ejaculated her lover. "The first I never doubted. It was my tender anxiety for the latter that has called down your present censure on me."

"As for you, my Lord," turning to Lord Orville, his indignant feelings flashing from his eyes, "your insidious baseness now renders a personal explanation necessary; and I shall seek it in a proper place."

"Sir," retorted Lord Orville, "were any other name in question than that of Miss Hartley, I might, perhaps, make as haughty a reply to your remark as it deserves."

"Oh, for heaven's sake, my Lord!" interrupted Emily: but he continued:

"But ill directed, indeed, must that passion be which can make the object of its love the subject of a public dispute; and I despise the man whose arguments lie in a bullet, or whose word is sustained at the point of his sword."

"What a just, what a noble sentiment! to prefer the real reputation of a woman to fantastic ideas of imaginary honour;" ejaculated Emily.

Forrester, at hearing his own words thus turned against himself, could no longer restrain his indignation; giving a glance of mingled fierceness and contempt at Lord Orville, he exclaimed,

"I feel, Sir, that my truth is unable to cope with your cunning; that was a part of your Lordship's character I had yet to learn. Miss Hartley, I have never yet ventured to warn you

against that character, because I thought there was nobility even about its errors. But I have been mistaken. Beware of him; beware his talents; beware his insidious attentions. I know that while the wand of the enchanter is upon you, I cannot break his spell; but truth shall wither up the envenomed flowers which hide the serpent from your view, ere his coil is so strongly woven round your heart, as to leave its poison there for ever."

And so saying, he quitted the room, startling Emily almost into conviction of his truth by his energy, and, throwing even Lord Orville in some measure from the balance of his equanimity, "S'death this is not to be borne," exclaimed Orville; and making an attempt to follow him, he was detained by Emily.

"No, no, my Lord, follow him not. He speaks but in the intemperance of disappointment. Nay, I beseech you for heaven's sake—for my sake—"

"For your sake?" said Orville, "That is indeed a plea I know not how to resist. For your sake I could indeed bear much. But

should he repeat this in the world, what will repay me for the scorn I must endure? Will she, for whose sake, I consent to run the risk of it, repay me by her smiles? Will her eye beam with kindness when that of the world shall be averted with scorn?"

"Oh, my Lord, urge me not now," entreated Emily; "I am unfit; agitated; let me retire; leave me to myself I beseech you; yet promise that you will avoid all intercourse with Mr. Forrester."

"I promise," replied Lord Orville, "and should we meet accidentally, will only tell him your anxiety for his safety."

"I am anxious for both," rejoined Emily; "and I am sure Lord Orville will not forget that my name may be compromised by any dispute, of which I am the unfortunate occasion."

With this Lord Orville permitted her to retire, anxious to put in execution his attempt at an interview with his fair incognita; whom, from the circumstance of Forrester's having been seen entering the house, he half suspected to be the object of some liaison of his rival's; so apt is the

mind of one man to form a judgment of the actions of another from a recollection of his own.

As for Emily, it was some time before she could recover the agitation which this scene had occasioned. Her mind was filled with doubts; her decision and her judgment perplexed. There was a flash of indignant truth in Forrester's eye, and a burst of virtuous indignation in his parting speech, that almost carried conviction of his sincerity to her heart. She had known him too from her infancy; could he so long have played the hypocrite? yet had she not heard by accident, and from a stranger, of conduct that proved him to be one; and did not her own vascillating conduct require that he should be so, to justify the change which had taken place in her feelings? Yet why was not Lord Orville more explicit; why did he confine his attention to expressions of admiration; to exclamations of pleasure; to covert hints of her power over him, without any declaration that could enable her to define his meaning or intention. Could *he* deceive her? Here indeed was mortification, if not wretchedness! Then arose

that comparison between the person, manners, and talents of the rivals, which was always so favourable to Orville; and she gave her belief to the sincerity of him whom she wished to find sincere.

Oh woman, why do you suffer your eyes to guide your judgment? why permit your heart to influence your reason? why prefer the tinsel of modern accomplishment to the more intrinsic merit of a correct mind and a sound discretion? Yet, why ask these questions, which may be answered by the finale in our Church Service, "as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever will be."

CHAPTER XII.

PATRONAGE.

Tu proverai si come sa di sale
Lo pane altrui, e com è duro calle
Lo scudere e'l salir l'altrui scale.

DANTE.

It is impossible to take any real view of society without being compelled to fill our pages with a very numerous dramatis personæ. Our readers must therefore be content to exert the faculty of their memories, in recollecting all the several persons whom we have introduced to them, as we find it convenient to recur to their history and actions. They must imagine themselves walking through our imaginary world, and encountering the people of our imagination,

when and where we please to place them. Every one almost has a numerous acquaintance, and, as they are met in the course of a perambulation in the day, or in a round of parties at night; the history and situation of each individual at once recurs to the mind. It must be thus in our book, only that the numerous persons in our pages, although their pursuits are so different, have all a slight tendency to the great end of our novel. Their number, however, makes it rather difficult for us to keep them sufficiently before our readers, to ensure the recollection of all the different parties without some interlocutory matter to recall them to their remembrance. They must permit their minds to accompany us from Orville House to the humbler apartment of Langley; from the peccadilloes of our little milliner, to the more splendid sinners in Portland-place; and though they may perceive no immediate connection between the individual incidents which are detailed, they will find them all leading to the general catastrophe of our work. What, indeed, is the life of any individual, or the history of any society, but a series of un-

connected circumstances? A series of vanities, affections, love, hate, poverty, and misfortune; or of lucky chances and changes. And such the reader must be content to find our book. Leaving for a time, therefore, Hartley and Caroline, the Woodvilles, Forrester, and the Orvilles, we must again take a glance at Langley and his wife in their second floor.

There is scarcely any thing in life so painful in the feeling, or so melancholy in the contemplation, as the affectation of high spirits and of gaiety while the heart is breaking beneath; as the forced smile of mirth, while the tear of misery is trembling in the eye; or the necessity for the assumption and appearance of careless hilarity, while the mind is writhing under disappointment and misfortune.

This was precisely the situation of poor Langley. His mistaken notion, that he should at length attain the accomplishment of his views through some high connection, drove him into society, where he was sensible that his position was preserved only by the wit and spirit of his conversation. He was blind to the heartless-

ness of those persons who welcomed him only as long as he could conduce to their entertainment; and imagined himself to be making friends in those who only sought him as a companion to season by his wit the pleasures of their table, to entertain the company by which it was surrounded, and to be cast off like one of their champagne bottles, as useless and worthless the moment that its exhilirating qualities were exhausted.

He was too apt to take the cordial shakes of the hand with which he was greeted, as marks of real friendship, instead of the mere common greetings of society, bestowed alike on every one; and as he had never yet been burthensome to his friends, he was still considered a good fellow, though a poor devil, by the men of fashion with whom he associated.

Every body said, "Poor Langley," but nobody thought of relieving his poverty. All the gaiety of Langley was only on the surface; a convulsive sob would frequently stop the laugh which accompanied one of his own sallies, and when he has set the table in a roar, his own

heart was breaking. The very scenes in which he lived, the very society he frequented, the splendid banquets of which he partook, were all so many reproaches to him, when he thought of the situation of his wife and child, and of the actual penury of the position in which he was placed.

Still Langley had not felt that, which is perhaps the bitterest pang that unaccustomed poverty has to bear; that which is technically and heartlessly called "cutting." He had never given his friends the privilege, the pleasure, or the pain, of saying *no*, by asking any favours of them; for it is a privilege, a pleasure, or a pain, according to the disposition of the person who utters it; and the length of time which had elapsed without his having done this, had given even those, who had at first dreaded that their friendship might be called into active exertion by his application to them in his misfortunes, a confidence in his forbearance, which induced an increased cordiality on their part. Yet there was not one of them who were ignorant of his situation, and of the extreme reduc-

tion of his circumstances, and who were not wasting their influence, and bestowing their patronage on, far less deserving, though more obtrusive persons.

By this conduct Langley had preserved his independence, but he had likewise increased his poverty, which at the time of his application to Orville, was such, that it was only by the strictest economy that he had managed to make his diminished finances meet the extra expences rendered necessary by the birth of his child. The sum of money saved from the wreck of his former fortune was now nearly exhausted, and absolute want must have been his portion, unless some lucky change occurred. He was, however, buoyed up by the hopes he derived from Lord Orville's liberal promises; and although he considered it exceedingly unlucky that his Lordship should be out daily just at the time of his call, he never deemed himself the victim of one of those "not at homes," with which Tadpole and a few others of his casual acquaintance were so continually greeted at the doors of the great. When they did meet, Lord Orville never al-

lowed Langley the pain of reminding him of his promise, for he found it much the easiest method of getting rid of the question, by first alluding to it himself, and this he always did, by saying, "Ah, Langley! I have been about your business—every thing is *en traine*—but patience is necessary, a little patience and we shall succeed." Such a greeting as this was sure to stop any further question on the part of Langley; and it was upon such a speech that he fed his hopes till the next meeting, when he was sure to be greeted by another to the same effect. This was a sufficient proof that Lord Orville bore his application in mind, and that was all that Langley could expect at present. He therefore went on in the same career of hoping, till "hope deferred made his heart sick," and he began to droop under his increasing and accumulating distresses.

The few tradesmen, too, to whom he was indebted, not knowing his residence, began to annoy him at his club; where, among the many three cornered and other elegant shaped billets of invitation, sealed with various devices in wax

of different colours, he now found some very ugly, long, square-looking epistles, closed with large splashes of wafer, the contents of which made poor Langley any thing but content. They generally began, "Mr. Langley, Sir, your account for 18... having so long remained unpaid, we shall be obliged by an immediate settlement, and remain your humble servants to command." Humble servants! In time Langley knew these letters by instinct, and generally thrust them unopened into his pocket, where they remained, till, in a fit of desperate courage, he would read and answer them by an apologetic epistle that obtained him a few weeks longer grace. Death and our creditors are always sure to find us in the long run, even though we should have no "local habitation" to which they can address themselves.

Still Langley lived upon hope, concealed his poverty, went on in the same career, kept up the same connections, and was still the same pleasant companion which every where secured his welcome. But he became thin and pale; his cheek exhibited that hectic flush which betrays the want

of health and peace of mind; his eye grew dim, and his brow compressed with the cares which corroded his heart; and he frequently left the society which his wit had rendered gay, to weep in the solitude of his own reflections.

Some circumstances had likewise given him a new uneasiness with respect to his wife; she had been absent several times, when he had accidentally returned home during the day, without, as usual, accounting to him, by telling where she had been; and, once or twice, the maid had told him that a strange gentleman had inquired for her. Langley's confidence in his wife was unbounded; but he felt that his situation and pursuits had never permitted him to pay her the proper attentions of a husband, and that his peculiar position laid her open to misrepresentation, and, perhaps, to insult; and this, added to a naturally jealous disposition, where his affections were concerned, sometimes rendered him very uneasy.

In the mean time, in spite of Langley's forbearance, in never pressing for the performance of his promises, Lord Orville began to find

the sight of him to be troublesome. His very presence became a reproach, and made him too conscious of the heartlessness of his conduct, and the hollowness of his promises, to make it agreeable. He was, therefore, considering how he might manage with his Lady Mother to exclude him entirely from Orville House; while, from some information which Tadpole obtained with respect to his fair incognita, whom Orville was pursuing with the usual pertinacity with which he followed up any fancy of the moment, gave him a suspicion that Langley was, in some way or other, the obstacle to his success in that quarter. This was precisely the idea that would make Lord Orville hate any body; for, however recklessly he would cross the purposes of others, he could not bear that any of his own pursuits should be interfered with. He remembered Langley's unwillingness to perform the commission of following her the first day that he had met her, and his devolving that office upon Tadpole: and this, together with Tadpole's suspicion that Langley visited the house where

she lived, gave rise to a jealousy that determined him, at all events, to get rid of Langley for a time. At first, he thought of really keeping his promise, and providing for him in the West Indies; but this would take some time; and the idea that he had interfered with his pleasures, had raised Lord Orville's bile to such a degree, that he determined to manage his temporary absence in such a manner as, at the same time, to render it a punishment. Besides, Lord Orville had certainly not treated Langley well; and it is quite as much human nature to dislike those we have injured, as it is to hate those who have injured us.

Many may exclaim, "and what injury has Lord Orville done to Langley? He has merely made him a promise, which he did not mean to perform, and which Langley had no right to expect."

And is it no injury to mislead an honorable mind by false promises? to create hopes only to disappoint them? to lead a man on with misrepresentations, and anticipations, which are

never to be realized, and to leave him in the end with a heart broken by his disappointment?

If example could afford Lord Orville an apology for this, it certainly was not wanting; since such conduct is the daily and hourly practice of men in power and office.

Some of our readers may, perhaps, imagine, because we live in a country where the freedom of the subject is one of our greatest boasts, that this threat of Lord Orville was futile. This boasted freedom is, however, only for the independent. Independence is the only security in any country against power, where that power will condescend to exert itself unjustly. Lord Orville knew this; for it had not been the first time that the temporary absence of some intruder on his pleasures had been necessary, and that it had been accomplished. He knew, too, that agents are easily found, who conceal the real movers of any nefarious scheme, and he was not slow in finding them. When, indeed, had not rank and wealth the power to work mischief? and when was there not villainy to be bought, or

weakness to be tempted, to the perpetration of any thing that rank and power might project?

In the mean time, Langley, quite unconscious of this change in the sentiments of his patron, went on in the same way, and lived the same life; only that his heart grew sicker every day with disappointed hope, and that his waking thoughts every morning became still more melancholy and foreboding.

His wife saw this, and prepared for the worst. It was in vain that Langley tried to keep up the same spirits at home that he exhibited abroad. There is nothing so quick-sighted as affection, and particularly the affection of a woman, and Mrs. Langley saw the bitter feelings of disappointment that made him writhe under his assumed smile. He yet, however, continued to depend upon Lord Orville's almost daily promises; though at last he forbore to repeat them to his wife, upon whom they had long since ceased to have any effect. She, however, did her best, not only to keep up her own spirits, but to keep her husband's hopes alive; and

would not add to his uneasiness by telling him the pertinacity with which she had been watched, and the various insults she had received, though she little imagined that her husband's patron and her persecutor were the same person.

CHAPTER XIII.

FURNISHED LODGINGS.

Apartments to let *un*furnished, with every other convenience.
PARLOUR WINDOW.

THE perseverance and industry with which a man pursues any vicious purpose is astonishing. Let him make some good resolution, resolve upon some virtuous end, and he deliberates so long in its execution that the good in general arrives too late, or his purpose is frustrated before it is accomplished. But set his passions in a blaze, let an object of illicit gratification appear in view, and he is sure not to stop in its pursuit; no time is given for deliberation, and he pauses not till it is, in general,

too late for any thing but repentance. He rides after it as he would ride a race, and stops not till he arrives at the goal. This, perhaps, arises from a bad pursuit not bearing reflection. It must be pursued with thoughtless speed, or reason may stop us; while we reflect upon good till we neglect it.

It was thus with Lord Orville. From the moment that he had seen Mrs. Langley, he had watched most assiduously for an opportunity of obtaining another interview; and having succeeded in meeting her twice or three times, the idea of her beauty had so increased upon, and influenced his imagination, that he determined, at all hazards, to attempt its possession. The modesty and dignity with which she had repressed his advances, and the total seclusion which she at length adopted to avoid them, rather than tell her husband that which might involve him in additional difficulty, and which she knew would distress him uselessly, only added additional impetus to his exertions.

It is true that he was, in some measure, misled by the information that Tadpole had given

him, into the idea that she was a companion, and not a wife; and his notion that a woman, who had once been frail, only required another temptation, and another opportunity, to repeat her frailty, gave him, in his own mind, every chance of success.

Her retirement he attributed to affectation; and the difficulties which she threw in his way, he considered only as so many acts to enhance the value of the prize. An habitual libertine has very loose ideas of female virtue, and seldom believes in its existence. Orville, too, had found the power of gold over the female mind, not, perhaps, administered as a bribe to any thing but their vanities! and he knew that more women are misled by vanity than by any other feeling. He thought he had only to

> —— Let his protestations be
> Fashioned with rich jewels; for, in love,
> Great gifts and gold have the best tongues to move.
> Let him not spare an oath, without a jewel
> To bind it fast.

With these sentiments, Orville had little doubt of success. He therefore set to work to

lay regular siege to his fair incognita, or rather to her whom he knew only under the assumed name of Mrs. Roberts.

Every body knows that lodging-house keepers in London, are not the most immaculate people in the world. Like the Italian inn-keeper, they do not always insist upon seeing the marriage certificate of the various couples who domicile under their roof. The punctual payment of the rent, and a convenient blindness to certain extra charges, with which they eke out their weekly bills, are the principal ingredients of their notions of respectability, and constitute, in their minds, a proper lodger. Mrs. Letsom, in whose house Langley had taken lodgings for his wife, was a thorough bred woman of this class. She had a large portly person, with a fiery face, always ready for an obsequious smile, or a bullying frown, whichever would the best serve her purpose. Her bills were always delivered with such a determined air, that the unfortunate person against whose name Mrs. Letsom had put her *£. s. d.* saw that any thing like altercation would be useless, and any hope of abatement

nugatory. The only thing that was seen of her husband, who was a little man, was his name upon a small brass plate in the lower part of the door, and himself sneaking out at eight o'clock in the morning, and coming in with a single knock at nine o'clock in the evening; the intervening hours being spent in some counting-house, where he was happy to seek a refuge from the managing persecution of his better half, and to earn the weekly stipend of one pound one, with which he purchased her good humour on a Saturday night, and secured himself a little peace on the Sunday. It is true that Mr. Letsom's name was on the parish books; but it was Mrs. Letsom that was all in all; she paid the rent, rates, and taxes; she preferred her complaints against the negligence of watchmen and street-keepers, and was considered by her neighbours a very hard-working notable woman, and at the same sime a very lucky one, as her lodgings were very seldom vacant.

When Mr. and Mrs. Langley first took her second floor, under the name of Roberts, they appeared so "vastly genteel," to use her own

phrase, and paid down their earnest money so handsomely, that she inquired no further. Their faces and their conduct were sufficient letters of recommendation, and the punctuality with which all her demands were discharged, was in her mind the best evidence of their moral rectitude. The only thing which had ever displeased her, was the impossibility she found of treating them with her usual familiarity, and of being at all intimate with Mrs. Langley.

With her first floor people she had seldom been admitted to, and, indeed, seldom sought any other intercourse than the payment of her bills, as she naturally considered them above her; but, with her second floor, she had generally been used to gossip, and sometimes take a cup of tea; which had never been the case with the present lodgers, and this Mrs. Letsom held somewhat in dudgeon.

We have seen, however, that poor Langley's resources had been gradually diminishing, and his wife's confinement, from the weak state of her health, had led him into such a variety of unanticipated expences, that the rent, with Mrs. Let-

som's et ceteras, was not quite so punctually discharged as formerly. At first, Mrs. Letsom naturally supposed this might arise from accident, but when this want of punctuality had occurred two or three times, she began, in her own elegant phrase, to "smell a rat," and to think that all was not quite right. She suddenly recollected that she had required no references; and, that although for the year and a half that they had lived under her roof, they had conducted themselves so quietly and respectably, that even the most fastidious of London landladies might have been satisfied, yet during that period they had never asked her to "so much as a cup of tea;" although they had no other visitors of any sort or kind. This latter circumstance, which had heretofore been a matter of congratulation to the scouring propensities of Mrs. Letsom, since it made the Saturday's scrub last the longer, and go the farther, now struck her as remarkable: she recollected too, that Mrs. Roberts was a very pretty woman, and that Mr. Roberts scarcely ever spent any other part of his time, excepting the nights, in the house.

All this became suddenly mighty suspicious, and the virtue of the good landlady was beginning to take the alarm, and her fears to be raised for the hitherto immaculate respectability of No. 3.

It was about this period that, Orville's emissaries having watched in vain for two or three days without catching even a glimpse of the object of their vigilance, either in the street, or at the window; and, tired of the very little progress that had been made by his sapper and miner, Tadpole, and the very inefficient information he obtained through the same means; determined to relieve his impatience and prosecute the adventure himself.

Leaving his horses therefore in the square, that was in the vicinity of Langley's domicile, for, in this metropolis, splendour is a very near neighbour to poverty; he soon arrived at the door, and ascertained that he was right, by the name of Letsom, now almost effaced from the plate by the rubbing which it underwent every morning from the robust hand of Mrs. Letsom's maid of all work. That lady, as she saw her "good name" thus gradually vanish-

ing under the influence of scouring-paper, had once or twice spoken of purchasing a new plate; but as she looked at the weakly state of her domestic partner, she bethought herself that the letters would last quite as long as the good man himself, and that she had therefore better wait, and get a new brass plate and a new husband together.

Mrs. Letsom was in the midst of her cogitations about her second floor lodgers, and in the act of slicing a round of toast for her first floor, when Lord Orville's smart rap at the door almost caused her to drop the loaf, and to cut her fingers; or, as she pithily and elegantly expressed it, made her almost "cut more than she could eat." Thinking, however, that such a knock was of course to her first floor, she resumed her occupation. On the street door being opened, Lord Orville merely said, "Any body at home?" "Oh, in the parlour; very well; I'll find my way;" he passed the maid, who was astounded at what she called his "imperence," till she found he was really a gentleman, and then she called it "perliteness."

"Betty, Betty, what is all that there noise about?" roared out Mrs. Letsom, at the top of her voice, when the parlour door opened, and Orville entered.

There was that in Lord Orville's appearance which so evidently bore the impress of a gentleman, that there was no mistaking it; his person, manners, and movements, required no adjunct from dress to convince those whom he addressed that he was a man of rank and consequence. He wore those marks of aristocracy in the bearing of his whole person, which Lord Byron has said may be discovered in the "fingers ends."

The half familiar, half respectful bow, with which he uttered, "Mrs. Letsom, I presume;" and the air with which he took off his hat, at once soothed the landlady's ire at the temporary bustle in her hall; down went her voice from the discordant pitch it had assumed, to the sweetest and lowest note it could command; down went the loaf, down went the knife, down went the tucked up corners of her gown, and down went Mrs. Letsom herself to her lowest and best curtesy, as she said,

"Yes, Sir; very much at your service, Sir. Pray be seated, Sir."

"Allow me to place you a chair, madam;" said Lord Orville, as he handed one from the side of the room to the side of the fire; while she officiously dusted and placed another opposite for his own occupation.

"Upon my word! a nice, snug, compact mansion, and a very pleasant situation, my good Mrs. Letsom," said Lord Orville, looking out of the window at a dull, black, blank, dirty wall, which reared itself within a few feet, as the gable end of the chapel of ease to the parish; "not liable to be overlooked either."

"Not at all, Sir, except of a Sunday, during Divine Service, by the charity children. That's the windy of their gallery," said Mrs. Letsom: "To be sure, to make up for that, you can hear them sing; aye, and almost hear the parson preach too, without the trouble of going to church."

"That must be remarkably convenient," observed Orville.

"Oh, very convenient," replied the landlady;

"and then you can see every berring that comes, from all my upper windys, rain or sunshine, without budging a foot."

"That is certainly very lively," observed Lord Orville: "You let lodgings, I believe, Mrs. Letsom."

"Yes, Sir, very much at your service; and very sorry I am too, for your sake, as well as my own, that they are all full. There's my first floor, quite genteel people—has a gig of their own—at least, I believe 'tis their own; for it comes every Sunday, and it is always the same; and that does'nt look like a hir'd un, you know, Sir—does it now?" said Mrs. Letsom, in a breath.

"Certainly not. I should think your judgment correct upon the subject of the gig in your first floor," replied Lord Orville; "but your second floor, Mrs. Letsom?"

"Oh, for my second floor, if you would put up with that, I thinks I might be able to accommodate you in a week or two; for I was just a thinking that I should be obliged to give them people a notice to quit," said the good

andlady, adding another five shillings per week, in her imagination, to the already exorbitant rent produced by the two rooms and the closet, dignified with the name of dressing-room, which constituted the conveniences of the floor in question.

"It is not exactly about your lodgings, my good Mrs. Letsom, but about your inmates, that I have taken this liberty of making your acquaintance. I wish to know something about your second-floor lodgers," said Orville, carefully watching Mrs. Letsom's countenance, to ascertain whether there was any risk of offending her, should he try to engage her in the promotion of his wishes.

"Something about my second-floor lodgers?" repeated Mrs. Letsom.

"Yes; you have a remarkably pretty woman there, I think; and I am a little anxious to obtain some information respecting her—that is, if I can prevail upon my good Mrs. Letsom to be as good-natured and kind, as her appearance bespeaks her to be," pursued Lord Orville, still

watching the landlady's countenance, which was now lighted up by a smile of knowing consciousness and cunning, that soon convinced him he might go any lengths he pleased with her.

"What, Mrs. Roberts?" said she.

"The same," replied Orville; "I confess that she has raised my curiosity."

During these few last questions Mrs. Letsom had scanned the person of her visitor more particularly, and began to think him superior to any lodging that No. 3 could boast. His white hand flourished a whip, which, with his spurs attachés, bespoke him the master of a horse, if not horses; one of the fingers of the said white hand also displayed a diamond, that almost dazzled her as it glanced brightly in the reflection of the fire; a white pocket handkerchief, too, distributed such a perfume as had never before regaled the nostrils of Mrs. Letsom, and which seemed, to her olfactory judgment, like the smell of a true gentleman; all these observations had their due effect upon the mind of the landlady, an effect that was not at all diminished

by a person and features seldom surpassed in manly beauty. Seeing at once through the whole drift of his visit, she simperingly said,

"Well—you ra-al gentlemen are sich gentlemen for the ladies; where will you all go to?"

This sentence set Lord Orville quite at his ease with regard to any qualms he might have felt as to employing Mrs. Letsom as a means of communication. He soon knew quite as much of her lodgers, as she did herself; and indeed a great deal more than she knew to any certainty. But the fact of the rent not being paid had made Mrs. Letsom quite capable of suspecting any and every thing; and she argued from these premises, together with other circumstances, that most likely "Mrs. Roberts was not a lawfully married woman."

From the description which Mrs. Letsom gave of Mr. Roberts, Lord Orville was soon convinced that it was not Forrester; although Tadpole had certainly seen him enter the house. It, however, tended rather to increase a suspicion that had once or twice crossed his mind, that

Langley played him false, and was himself the cher ami of Mrs. Roberts; for one or two of his emissaries had seen somebody enter, whose description appeared to answer that of Langley. This, together with Langley's tenaciously claiming the performance of his promises to assist him, had determined Lord Orville, by some means, to prevent both his intrusion, or his importunity; and he had this very morning adopted steps which he thought would effectually prevent both. Until within these very few days, Mrs. Letsom averred that her lodger had no visitors; though, within that period, she had been inquired for by several, and, among others, by an old gentleman, who seemed to know more of her, and "not much to her advantage," as Mrs. Letsom said, than even Mrs. Letsom herself.

From all this, Orville could not discover much; but he formed the greatest hopes of easy success from the circumstance of her poverty. All, therefore, that he requested of Mrs. Letsom was, to contrive an opportunity for his seeing her alone, and securing him from any interruption. This was readily promised on the

part of the obsequious landlady, who, informing Lord Orville that her "first floor" was going to Covent Garden, and that the whole house would be clear in about an hour, advised him to return at that time, when she would contrive that every body should be out of the way; and, to use a technical phrase, "no questions asked."

The douceur which Mrs. Letsom received for her compliance with Lord Orville's wishes made her eyes glisten with pleasure; and, as she obsequiously opened the door to her visitor, she simpered out something of "Mrs. Roberts being a very happy woman."

On returning to her parlour she found that the handkerchief, the scent of which had been so gratifying to her olfactory nerves, had been left behind. This, of course, became the immediate object of investigation; and the fineness of its texture, far beyond even her own extravagance in the frills of Mr. L.'s best shirts, did not at all diminish her ideas of the consequence of her visitor. Mrs. Letsom's imagination, of course, soon appropriated this article to her own use, but in doing this the mark in the corner at-

tracted her attention, and puzzled her not a little. It was an O. with what she called a flower-pot over it. Now, the meaning of this flower-pot was what she wished to find out; for, never having seen such a thing before, her curiosity was raised, and to gratify it, away she posted to a neighbour, who was a fashionable laundress, and whose knowledge of heraldry, derived from the tails of shirts, the corners of pocket handkerchiefs, and such other portions of the linen of the nobility as are blazoned with their honors, either in permanent ink, or marking stitch, enabled her to pronounce the said flower-pot to be neither more nor less than a coronet; and that, therefore, the handkerchief in question belonged to a lord—"to a ra-al lord," as Mrs. Lettsom emphatically said.

This confirmation of her opinion that her visitor was somebody "particular," we may be sure did not diminish Mrs. Letsom's empressement in his service. It is astonishing how vice is diminished in our ideas, and what a lenient form it assumes, and how much less vicious and

seducing terms we give it, when the perpetrator is a man of rank.

Mrs. Letsom, therefore, hurried home; only ejaculating, as she went along, "Well, what a lucky woman Mrs. Roberts is!—but some persons are born with silver spoons in their mouths —though what a lord can see in her pale face, I can't for the life of me imagine. However, that is nothing to me:

> People differ in taste, as in opinion;
> Some like an apple, some an *innion*."

And with this apposite and elegant quotation, the only one that Mrs. Letsom ever made in her life, she prepared to send every body out of the way, that the lord might have his interview free from interruption.

CHAPTER XIV.

CONTRE-TEMPS.

But to be seen in such a place—what will the world say?

SIR HARRY WILDAIR.

PAUL PRY himself was scarcely a greater marplot than old Admiral Frankley, when he took any whim into his head upon the various affairs in which he thought it his privilege to interfere. As to Emily, Hartley, and Forrester, together with Lady Orville's family, he considered them all quite as amenable to him as though they were his own children, or he their guardian. The knowledge he himself possessed of what he intended to do for them, in the disposition of

his immense property, gave him, in his own opinion, the privilege of regulating and scrutinizing their conduct; while he forgot that their ignorance of this intention on his part did not, in their minds, give him any right to the kind of authority he assumed. His general oddity and good humour, however, together with the number of valuable presents he was continually making them, generally secured their attention to his lectures; though they did not always ensure their obedience to his wishes.

The union of Forrester with Emily had always been among his favorite projects; though he easily gave it up the moment he supposed an attachment to exist between that young lady and Lord Orville—to cross true love was in his idea a crime of no little magnitude. He had, however, always conceived such a very high opinion of Forrester's moral character and conduct, that he became quite incensed at learning, through the medium of Tadpole's communication, that he had been deceived; and he forthwith determined to sift the matter to the bottom, and expose the Joseph Surface who covered his

libertinism with such a cloak of morality. With this view he applied to Tadpole, who, too happy to oblige an inmate of Orville House, and particularly one so distinguished by the Countess as the Admiral, soon told him where the lady in question lived, although he kept the secret of his having discovered it by the direction of Lord Orville; and, of course, concealed from his Lordship that he had given this information to the Admiral. Lord Orville himself had likewise greatly aggravated the Admiral's anger against Forrester; and had done every thing to impress him with the truth of the result of Tadpole's communication. The Admiral, therefore, determined to strike at the root of the evil, and to include the syren herself in his lecture; for, among his other oddities, he had great ideas of his own powers of conversion; and, in spite of his anger, from what he learned, as the result of his inquiries in the neighbourhood, the lady in question was well worthy of their exertion. This became, in his opinion, still more necessary, from the circumstance of Forrester's per-

sisting in not understanding him; and in denials of the truth of the Admiral's accusation.

To convict him, therefore, from the lady's own lips, was become necessary to the Admiral's pertinacity. Yet with his notions of female decorum, it was some time before he could make up his mind to visit such a woman as he conceived this to be. What would his friends say if they discovered it? He should subject himself to the ridicule of the whole club; and, perhaps, furnish an anecdote for another Naval Sketch book. He winced under these ideas, and the fears that they instilled into his mind; and it was some time before he resolved on the step, which he at length took on the very day that Lord Orville had made his acquaintance with Mrs. Letsom, and that she had agreed to assist him in obtaining an uninterrupted interview with her lodger. Her anxiety, however, to discover more particulars concerning her visitor, through the medium of the handkerchief, had, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, induced her to quit her post to consult the heraldic knowledge of her neighbour, the laun-

dress. It was during this period of her absence, that Mrs. Langley, who had for some days been too much annoyed by the growing familiarity and impertinence, both of her landlady and the servant, to ask any thing at their hands, had taken advantage of her infant's sleep, to go out into the immediate neighbourhood to purchase some few necessaries: and just at the same time, the Admiral stole into the street, looking as sheepish and ashamed as though he were going to commit a larceny, and was afraid of detection. He did not know what sort of a character the house itself might bear, which was inhabited by a female of such habits; and was, therefore, naturally afraid to be seen knocking at the door. With this fear, he passed it once or twice, and walked up and down the street with an assumed air of unconsciousness, purposely examining every house but the right one. At length, cautiously looking round, and ascertaining that there was no other passenger near, he seized the knocker, and gave a hurried and trembling rap at the door. The minute that must necessarily intervene between the time of this operation and

the application being answered, seemed an age to the poor Admiral. He fidgeted about, looked first one side, and then the other, and stood at a little distance from the door, gazing at the Stilton cheeses in an adjoining shop, as though he was not waiting for its being opened. Under such circumstances, to be obliged to knock a second time, and to kick one's heels during the pleasure of a lazy servant, is among the miseries of human life. The Admiral's eyes absolutely twinkled with impatience, while he mentally uttered some few of his usual oaths; and his second rap not having been answered on the instant, he was actually thinking of a retreat, when the door opened and released him. He slipped in with a celerity that put him out of sight of any passer by in a moment; and asking if Mrs. Roberts was within, received the reply of the sulky girl—"Yes, she's at home—second floor." Up went the Admiral; thinking within himself, the readiness with which the girl told him to mount to the lady's apartment, to be a confirmation of the character of the house, and its inhabitants. Arrived on the land-

ing, the Admiral felt rather awkward; and began to cogitate as to his mode of addressing the lady, and as to the lecture he should give her for seducing his young friend from his allegiance. His second gentle tap having remained unanswered, he ventured to open the door, and, seeing nobody, boldly entered the apartment. Here, hem-ing very loudly, he trusted to bring the lady from one of the inner rooms, with which he supposed the two doors he saw communicated. No person, however, appearing, either on his repeated coughs, or on his tapping at the said two doors, he supposed the object of his visit to have gone out without the knowledge of the servant, and was thinking of retreating, when the idea of the sensation he had experienced below, determined him rather to wait for the return of the lady, than have to run the ordeal of again standing in the street at the door of what he deemed a suspicious house.

He had now leisure to examine the apartment, which, so far from exhibiting those ill-assorted luxuries which are generally found in the residences of women of the description the Admiral

supposed the occupier to be, was distinguished by nothing but its extraordinary neatness; while some needle-work, still lying on the work-table, gave evidence of a kind of industry not at all in consonance with the ideas he had formed.

The only decoration which the apartment could boast was a picture in a superb frame over the chimney-piece. The gilding of this, which was much superior to any thing else in the room, was carefully papered up, while a green curtain helped to preserve the picture itself from the dust, and showed either the particular value set on it by the owner, or designated it to be a subject not exactly calculated for general exposition. Considering the place he was in, this latter idea took possession of the Admiral's mind, and he blushed at the supposed depravity which sanctioned such profanation of the art. Curiosity was, however raised, and removing the curtain, instead of the Venus he expected, he beheld the portrait of a female, apparently about fifty years of age, whose features gave indication of great former beauty, and much recent sorrow or

sickness. There was something in this portrait which rivetted the Admiral's attention; something that told him he had seen either the original, or the portrait, or something like it before. But when, or where, it was impossible for him to recollect. Still, however, the portrait seemed to inspire him with an interest, for which he tried in vain to account; and he amused himself during the tedious interval of waiting, by endeavouring to bring to his remembrance some reason to which he might ascribe his interest in this picture. Beneath it, hung a small sketch of a boy, in a midshipman's jacket, with the shirt collar open; but this he only glanced at for a minute, as wearing the uniform of his own profession. It was the picture of the female that almost painfully attracted his attention, and roused his curiosity.

In the mean time Mrs. Letsom, having derived fresh energy in the cause of Lord Orville, since the discovery that what she had thought to be a flower-pot on the handkerchief, was in reality a coronet, began to perform her promise of preparing to secure him an uninterrupted in-

terview with her lodger. For this purpose she despatched her maid to some distance, in such a hurry, that the girl either had not time, or forgot, to tell her mistress of the visit of the Admiral. The moment the girl was gone, Mrs. Letsom also ascertained that her "First Floor" had departed; for she always distinguished her lodgers by the floor they occupied; and to have heard her say, that her "Parlours" were gone to the play; the "First Floor" to Vauxhall, and her "Second Floor" gone out to drink tea; one might have imagined good Mrs. Letsom's house to have been literally turned out of the windows. The coast being thus clear, she half mounted the second flight of stairs, and hearing the Admiral moving about, she imagined Mrs. Langley, as usual at home with her infant, and accordingly betook herself to the parlour, to await the arrival of her titled visitor; for such she now no longer doubted him to be.

Lord Orville had been too long frustrated in his attempt to see his fair incognita, and was too impatient for the promised opportunity, not to be punctual, and precisely at the hour that Mrs.

Letsom had designated as that at which her "First Floor" was sure to have departed, he entered the street. It so happened, that Langley, moody and low spirited, had resolved to give up his dinner party, and return home to spend the evening with his wife; and entering the street precisely at the same moment, he literally ran against Lord Orville, close to the door of his own lodgings.

The surprise at this rencontre was mutual, and extorted an exclamation from each of them. In Lord Orville's mind, it confirmed his suspicions of Langley's connection with the lady, and thus a considerable quantity of anger was mingled with his wish to get rid of him. On Langley's part, the only sensation he experienced was the fear of his humble lodging being discovered, and he considered himself exceedingly lucky in not having knocked at his door before he saw Lord Orville, and was almost afraid that his very consciousness would betray him. He seemed to think second floor was written in his face; and was casting about in his mind to discover some

excuse for being in the street when Lord Orville, who was never at a loss, exclaimed,

"My dear Langley! how fortunate: I have literally hunted you to day; I looked in at the club twice, hoping to find you. I have seen his Grace of ——, who desired to see you before five in Downing-street. I see it wants but ten minutes of that hour, so you had better make the best of your way; should you be too late, go directly to the club, and wait there for me; I will come and take you to his private house."

Langley's countenance brightened at this intelligence, and as Orville familiarly took his arm and hurried him out of the street, he was profuse in his expressions of gratitude. In the next street, Lord Orville said, "But you will walk faster without me, and may perhaps still be in time; should you be too late, don't move from the club till I come."

Away went Langley in the direction of Downing-street, while Lord Orville, by a circuitous route, again attained the door of No. 3, which was speedily opened by the obsequious Mrs. Letsom; who, curtseying to the ground, whis-

pered that all was safe, and preceded him to the first floor landing; when Orville, impatiently passing her, said aloud, "Well, well, I'll find my way, don't trouble yourself," proceeded alone to the second story.

The Admiral, who was still engaged in contemplating the portrait, having heard the knock at the door, and the steps ascending the stairs, had naturally enough imagined the lady to be coming, he therefore prepared accordingly; but nothing could exceed his consternation when Lord Orville's voice struck upon his ear. All the power of that young nobleman's ridicule at once occurred to his imagination, and all the horrors of the discovery he had dreaded, stared him in the face with ten fold horrors. There being but one egress and entrance into the apartment, no opportunity of escape from the threatened danger presented itself; concealment was the only resource, and imagining that Lord Orville would immediately retire on finding the lady absent, he hastily opened one of the inner doors, and as hastily shutting, locking, and bolt-

ing it, found himself concealed, to his increased consternation, in the lady's bed-room.

The first question that naturally occurred to the Admiral's mind was, what could bring Lord Orville there; and this, in the simplicity of his heart, was answered, by the supposition that he was actuated by the same motives as himself; and he internally lauded Orville for so meritorious an intention.

On discovering the apartment to be vacant, Orville, like the Admiral, had made an application to each of the inner doors, and not at all adding to the old gentleman's tranquillity by so doing. Receiving no reply, he began to apprehend that the object of his pursuit must be in some other part of the house, and descended in search of the landlady to ascertain the fact. Mrs. Letsom, however, though very willing to oblige such a generous visitor, and to give him every facility in her power, had still an eye to her own safety; and not being at all certain in her own mind how Lord Orville might be received by her lodger, she determined to keep out of the way, so that if any scene of violence

should occur, she might at any rate plead ignorance, and have the excuse of absence. The moment, therefore, that she had ushered Lord Orville to the second floor, she had quitted the house, leaving him as she imagined, "a clear stage and fair play;" and thus, as she expressed it, "kept her own neck out of the noose, happen what would."

When Lord Orville found himself, as he imagined, quite alone in the house, he was at first rather puzzled as to his proceedings; but certain of Mrs. Letsom, he determined to return to the apartment up stairs, and wait the event.

His return was no pleasure to the Admiral, who heard him impatiently pacing up and down the room, with no very enviable feelings. During the short absence of Lord Orville, the Admiral had found that he was not the sole occupant of the bed-room; for, concealed by the curtains, he had discovered a chubby boy sleeping in all the soundness of infant innocence. This added not a little to his perplexity, as should the little urchin awake, it was but natural that he should cry at the sight of a stranger, and the

Admiral began to think how he should quiet him should such an event happen.

Two or three times Lord Orville tried the lock of the door which led to the room in which the Admiral had taken refuge, to ascertain if it was really fastened. During these attempts the old gentleman's perturbation increased ten fold, and despairing at length of the departure of the intruder, he began to curse the inadvertence which had got him into a dilemma, from which he saw no chance of escaping without disagreeable consequences.

At length the street door was heard to open and shut; and it was evident that somebody had let themselves in: footsteps were presently heard ascending the stairs, and Mrs. Langley entered the apartment, having admitted herself into the house by the Bramah key which every lodger possessed.

Lord Orville had placed himself in such a position that she had closed the door and entered the apartment without perceiving him, until she was too far advanced to retreat, as she

certainly would have done, had she seen him in the first instance.

On discovering him, she uttered a half shriek of mingled surprise and fear, and would have again attained the door, had not Lord Orville respectfully placed himself so that she could not gain it without passing him.

"Pardon my intrusion;" Lord Orville was commencing, when Mrs. Langley interrupted him with the question, of "How he had gained admittance to her apartment?" in a voice rendered nearly inarticulate from agitation. She had recognized her persecutor, and, in additior to her fears of being alone with him, now added the dread of the consequences that might ensue should her husband return.

"You cannot be ignorant that your own attractions have induced my endeavours to obtain an interview, and my perseverance has at length crowned them with success. You must have been long aware how ardently this interview has been desired by me; and though you have had the cruelty to deny me a voluntary meeting, I

trust you will give me credit for the exertions which have thus procured me a pleasure I have so long solicited in vain."

"I am aware, Sir," replied Mrs. Langley, "of having been at various times insulted by your addresses, and you cannot be ignorant of the manner in which they have been repulsed. Your intrusion here, Sir, bespeaks a conduct which I am loth to characterize by the name it deserves."

"Nay, nay; this is being too severe. In the street, exposed to the public gaze—I could account for the coyness which repulsed me—but here, you may listen to me in safety."

"I will listen to nothing, Sir," interrupted Mrs. Langley: "these are my apartments, and I desire the free occupation of them."

"It was my knowledge that they were yours that has caused my intrusion into them. That they are unworthy of you, will be your own fault in future, if—"

Mrs. Langley again interrupted him, and assuming all the courage and calmness she could command, she said, "Sir, if I have hitherto

confined my attempts at extricating myself from undeserved insult to requests that you quit my apartments, it is because I am anxious to avoid any exposition that may be misinterpreted; I—"

"Nay, hear me, at any rate. Excuse me for saying, that indeed you must hear me. I find you here in poor apartments, quite unworthy of you. I know, from my inquiries the situation in which you are placed, and I come to offer you to ameliorate it; nay, to make it splendid in the comparison with what it is now."

"What have I done, Sir, to draw down this insult on me?" asked Mrs. Langley. "If any information you have received as to my situation, can have induced it, your information has been false; and I know not what right you had to make either my name or circumstances the subject of inquiry."

"Will not my love, my admiration, plead my excuse—"

"Hold, Sir! insult me not by expressions, which, as a wife, it is criminal for me to permit; and which, were it otherwise, would be as useless as they are displeasing to me."

"Wife!" exclaimed Orville, in a tone of doubt.

"Yes, Sir, and as such I intreat you, if you be a gentleman, to quit these apartments, and avoid the chances of an encounter with my husband."

"Husband!" again repeated Orville, in the same tone: "If you are a wife, you are at least a neglected one—"

"*If* I am!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley, with indignation: "That I *am* a wife, let my indignation convince you is true. That I am a neglected one, let the ardent affection I bear a deserving husband, convince you is false. But even were it otherwise, I trust I should find as strong a cause for my present indignation in female virtue alone, as I now find while that is united with my husband's love, and my contempt for you."

During this conversation, every word of which had been overheard by the Admiral, his eyes had been gradually opening to the deception which Lord Orville had practised upon him with regard to Forrester, and, trembling with

indignation, he could scarcely restrain himself from bursting into the room, and exposing such base hypocrisy as it deserved. With this feeling he almost forgot the awkward predicament in which he himself was placed; but on the mention of the husband, he began to feel that he had quite as much to dread from his indignation at appearances, as Orville had for his insulting intrusion. There was, however, no other remedy than to remain quietly until Lord Orville should retreat, which he had no doubt would soon be the case, from the reception he had met with, and then make the best apology that he could for his own situation.

Lord Orville, however, with all his knowledge of the world, and misled, perhaps, by the reports that he had heard, wanted the tact to discriminate between the really virtuous indignation of the woman he was addressing, and that assumed anger which so many of the sex exhibit under similar circumstances. He therefore most pertinaciously continued his addresses, until Mrs. Langley insisted on his quitting the room instantly, or at all personal risk she threatened to raise the house.

Lord Orville, whose passions had become the more inflamed by her opposition, and whose admiration of her beauty had been greatly increased during this interview, felt the futility of her threat, and telling her that any application to the bell would be useless, from his having contrived to get every body out of the way, seemed determined to make the most of the opportunity that Mrs. Letsom had afforded him. Recollecting the fortunate result of his perseverance upon former occasions, and still miscalculating the character he had to deal with, he approached Mrs. Langley. Alarmed at her defenceless situation, she intreated him by every thing that was honourable—by every thing that was dear to him, to quit her: Lord Orville, however, seemed determined to persist, for there is none so unfeeling and merciless as the sensualist when his passions are inflamed. Perceiving his determination, she uttered a scream, and exclaimed, "Oh, my husband! where are you in this moment of my peril! have I none to rescue me?" At these words the door of the bed-room was violently thrown open, and the Admiral rush-

ing forward, stood between her and her insulter, with his amber-headed cane raised over the head of the latter.

"Yes; you have *me!*" roared out the Admiral; "and in such a cause, the vigour of youth will again nerve my arm with sufficient strength to break any scoundrel's head that dares lay a finger on a defenceless woman."

Lord Orville and Mrs. Langley were equally astonished at the apparition of the Admiral; but the latter uttered an ejaculation of thanks at his appearance, and instinctively clung to him for protection.

Orville in a moment saw all his mother's schemes overturned, and the impossibility of averting the consequences of the discovery. Never, however, at a loss, he very soon recovered his sang froid; and, determining to brazen it out, either affected, or gave way to, a natural burst of laughter.

"Fairly hunted out, I declare," exclaimed he; and then, turning with a satirical air to Mrs. Langley, who, in spite of her evident surprise, he supposed to have had a knowledge of the Admiral's concealment, which was in his

mind a confirmation of the truth of his suppositions with regard to her, he said, "What, ma'am! this is another husband; perhaps you have one for every chamber. Upon my word, Admiral, I owe you an apology; and had you but have given me a hint of your presence, I should have made my retreat before."

"Insulting man!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley.

"D——n it, my Lord, don't put me in a passion; are you not ashamed to use rank and riches to insult virtuous poverty? Nay, nay, don't tremble so—he shan't hurt you now. After all it seems as though we had fought and bled in the service of our country, only to permit these scape-graces to pursue their career of vice in peace and quietness.

"Poor," replied Lord Orville, "because she would not listen to me. Virtuous," pursued he, with a sneer, "because you were in that chamber. Madam, I take my leave, and shall call at some more convenient season to make my apologies, when so near a neighbour may render it more convenient to reply as I wish. I beg your pardon, Admiral, for interrupting your amour:

at your age it is unfair—but, rest assured, in my detail of this adventure, I shall not forget the prominent part played by the correct Admiral Frankley;" and so saying, with one of his most elegant bows, he quitted the apartment.

The whole of this was said with such an air of bravadoing nonchalance, and with so much self-possession, that Lord Orville was half down stairs, humming "*batti! batti!*" before the Admiral recovered himself sufficiently to exclaim:

"What a d——d impudent fellow! I beg your pardon for swearing," said the Admiral; the first part in a passion, the last mechanically, as though he was speaking to Lady Orville.

"Admiral Frankley!" exclaimed Mrs. Langley, almost breathless with surprise, and in a voice which seemed to doubt her sense of hearing, "Did I hear right?"

"I dare say you did—though damme, if I think I did. What did the gentlemanly rascal say?"

"He called you Admiral Frankley, Sir."

"Well; is lying so common that it becomes

extraordinary when a man is called by his own name?"

Mrs. Langley almost sank to the ground with the agitation which this confirmation of her having heard aright, occasioned. Leaning on the back of a chair for support, she gazed for a moment at the Admiral, and, bursting into tears, seemed ready to faint.

"Eh, what—why what's the matter? D—n it, don't faint, Ma'am—I don't understand it—here, Mrs. Landlady! Oh, curse these women, what the devil shall I do?" And, for want of any thing better, he began to fan Mrs. Langley with the broad-brimmed low-crowned hat which always formed a part of his costume, in spite of all Lady Orville's efforts to humanize him, with one hand, while he slapped her back with no very great degree of gentleness with the other.

"Oh, Sir," said Mrs. Langley, sinking on her knees, in spite of all his efforts to prevent her; "Oh, Sir—don't you know me?"

"Know you! how should I?—Pray, pray get up."

"Does not your heart tell you who I am?"

"No!—how the devil should it?—For God's sake get up—here's a cursed scrape!" And the Admiral really for a moment began to think himself the victim of some plan; when Mrs. Langley pointed to the picture, nearly unable to speak.

"Well, the picture; I see it."

"That, Sir, was my mother—"

"Well, I've no doubt it was;" and the Admiral was edging towards the door.

"And *your sister*—"

"Eh!" exclaimed the Admiral, almost jumping with surprise, and his retrograde movement arrested in a moment. "My sister! what Fanny!" and, gazing intently on the picture, his stern features relaxed, and a tear started into his eye, as the gradual recognition of one who had once been so dear to him, stole over his mind. "And so it is!—and you are—" turning to Mrs. Langley.

"Her only child; your niece. You will not throw me from you?"

"Throw you from me! Never.—Come to my arms; for I've a choking something in my

throat that is going to make a fool of me," stammered out the Admiral; and, in a moment, the uncle and niece were locked in a close embrace. "And the chubby-faced boy in the next room?" sobbed out the Admiral—

"Is mine."

"And mine—" repeated the Admiral.

At this moment Lady Orville's insinuations occurred to his memory; and connecting themselves with the scene which had just passed, and the sentiments which had actuated his visit to Mrs. Letsom's, began to rouse suspicions of his niece's correctness, which caused the heart of the Admiral to sink within him. Gently, therefore, putting Mrs. Langley away from him, he began to hem, and to cast about in his mind how he should satisfy himself. His niece looked at him uneasily and inquiringly.

"Well, but Fanny—is your name Fanny? your mother's was—I have heard strange tales. The father of your boy, where is he? your—your—"

"Oh, Sir, if you have heard any thing against my husband, he has been belied. It was he

who soothed my parents' last moments and who made them easy by promising me his protection. There is not a more affectionate heart, or a more generous soul in the world; though misfortunes may——"

"D——n his misfortunes. If he is a gentleman and a man of honor——"

"That, indeed, he is both," said Mrs. Langley, with energy; "and the gentlest and kindest of human beings."

"Then forgive me my suspicions, and come again to my arms," exclaimed the Admiral, while joy lighted up his rugged features; and he was in the act of again embracing his niece, when he found himself roughly seized by the shoulder, and compelled by a violent push to make various evolutions, not remarkable for their elegance, till his involuntary spin was stopped by the corner of the room; and as his eyes began to resume their power of sight, after the giddiness which the sudden whirl had occasioned, he beheld Langley standing in a threatening attitude between him and his niece.

After Langley had quitted Orville, some cir-

cumstances had occurred that had increased his feelings of jealousy with regard to his wife; and these adding bitterness to his disappointment, he determined to return home and seek some explanation. The Admiral's and Mrs. Langley's agitation had been too great for them to hear the street door open. Thus Langley had burst in upon them unawares, and had acted upon the first impulse of the moment, when he saw a stranger, as he thought, in such close contact with his wife.

"Why, Langley! what the devil? the 'gentlest of human beings,' indeed!"

"Admiral Frankley!" exclaimed Langley; though without any diminution of his indignation—"I am surprised that a man of your age—"

"Should spin so like a humming-top," interrupted the Admiral. "And so am I, cursedly surprised."

"How dare you, Sir, intrude into my apartments?"

"Oh, my dearest Langley, this is my uncle," said Mrs. Langley.

"Your uncle?"

"Yes; whose name you would never even let me mention to you."

"My dearest Langley! why, where is Mr. Roberts, then?" inquired the Admiral, now quite bewildered.

Satisfactory explanations were now given, and the Admiral was rejoiced beyond measure that his niece should have chosen one for her husband whom he had been so much inclined to love as Langley.

The grand nephew was now introduced; and by his smiles seemed to participate in the joy of his parents.

The adventures of the day were, however, as yet not quite over; for, in the midst of this general rejoicing, the door was quietly opened, and a tall, thin, lanky-looking person entered, followed by two ill-looking gentry, both forming a complete contrast in shortness and stoutness to their leader.

"That," said the taller one, "is Mr. Langley."

On which one of the others, producing a strip of paper, and approaching Langley, said—"You are my prisoner, at the suit of Mesurier versus Langley."

"He your prisoner! I'll be d——d if he is," roared out the Admiral; and, looking hard at the person who had first entered, he recognized him as the man sent to him by Lord Orville to measure him for the clothes which formed a part of the Countess's humanizing system, and to take his instructions for his new liveries. This long person, the moment he saw the Admiral, who was expected to be such a good customer, attempted a retreat, but was speedily brought back by the skirts of his coat.

"How dare your master arrest a gentleman?" asked the Admiral.

"A gentleman!" exclaimed the tailor, looking round the apartment.

"Come, come, Mr. Langley, we've no time to wait; we have no objection to be civil and indulge you with a coach, if you are willing to pay for it," said the head bailiff.

Langley, confounded between shame and rage, could scarely speak; and was much obliged by the Admiral's preventing him.

"What's the amount?"

"Fifty-four pounds, ten shillings."

"I have not so much about me; but you'll take my word for it?"

"I'm sorry, Sir," the bailiff was beginning—

"Not take my word! You rascal," speaking to the tailor, "tell these scoundrels to take my word."

"No hard words, Sir; civility is the soul of business, Sir," muttered the bailiff.

The tailor's satellite now seemed to adopt some sudden determination; and, taking the Admiral on one side, made a communication, to which the only reply he received was, "Then he's a d——d rascal. So trundle these bailiffs away, or your master shall never put another stitch into a piece of broad cloth for me; and I'll pay him Mr. Langley's bill."

This assurance of payment, and the Admiral's anger, soon cleared the room, both of tailor and the bailiffs, the latter of whom, however, received their "civility money," much to the annoyance of the Admiral.

It was then determined that none should yet be made acquainted with the discovery that had taken place. The Admiral, as usual, had a plan

of his own, which had just suggested itself to his mind, and he was determined to put it in execution. He, therefore, quickly took his leave of Mrs. Langley and the child with a kiss, and of Langley with a hearty shake of the hand; leaving them both happier than they had been since their marriage, while he went to prepare them a more suitable residence.

CHAPTER XV.

AN ELOPEMENT.

Such hearts as theirs were never pair'd above;
Ill-suited to each other; joined, not matched;
Some sullen influence, a foe to both,
Has wrought this fatal marriage to undo them.

Nor let a hostile husband's eyes explore
The warring passions, and tumultuous thoughts,
That rage within thee, and destroy thy reason.

FAIR PENITENT.

THERE is scarcely a truer adage than the trite one of "*ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute,*" or one of more general applicability to all the circumstances of life. Indeed, the "premier pas" once accomplished, too generally leads to the adoption of the ultra principle of self-gratification of "*coute qui coute.*"

The first movement of a battle is almost the only moment of fear. After the first fire, fear is lost in excitement, and even the coward be-

comes daring amidst the clash of swords, the clatter of musquetry, and the roar of cannon. In the performance of any great undertaking, it is the commencement which requires the greatest exertion; once begun, it is astonishing how easily the rest follows. In vice, it is the first step that costs the conscience the severest feeling. Let the burglar, the forger, or the murderer, look back through his career of guilt, and he will recollect experiencing a more bitter feeling of repentance for his first, perhaps venial, error, than he has felt for the ultimate deadlier crime which has brought him to the gallows.

It is rather remarkable, however, in the history of human feelings, that it is in the performance of good, and in a reformation from error, that this adage should be alone inapplicable. In these, every individual step requires a renewed exertion equal to the former one. It is mounting instead of descending the ladder; and it is only a continuance of labour, and a fresh resolution, that carries us to the top of it, through a series of praiseworthy conduct.

"*Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*" has,

however, been more generally applied to the frailty of the fair, than as the illustration of any other part of the history of human nature; and certainly no saying can be more truly to the point than under those circumstances which lead a woman from the first venial trespass beyond the strictly prescribed limits of female decorum, to that ultimate accomplishment of a guilty passion which plunges her into the depths of misery and disgrace.

A woman's only safety is not to admit the passion; and it is surprising what a slight exertion will exclude the entrance of that feeling, which, if once admitted, requires all the energies of human nature, and all the powers of human reason, to drive it from the heart where it has gained an ascendancy; and to give it the first footing is to give it this ascendancy. The heart that does not yield to its influence, and resists to the end, is in general broken with a struggle which the tenderness of human nature is not fitted to endure.

Our readers must imagine these little *transgressional* episodes of moralizing as so many

prologues to that desultory introduction of our dramatis personæ, which we are obliged to adopt to keep the continuous course of our history; and which, among them, will be so dense as not to imagine that the above observations must necessarily precede something in the history of Lady Olivia Tressel, whom we left scarcely struggling against the passion inspired by the artful and heartless Woodville; and whom we are doomed to find in the present stage of our history so completely given up to the violence of this feeling, as to have become almost lost to every fear of its consequences.

We have elsewhere, in a former work,* attempted to describe the influence of a guilty passion in a virtuous bosom, where principle opposed its progress in every stage; and where, in spite of that opposition, it still maintained sufficient ascendancy to create the misery, though it could not overpower the virtue, of an amiable woman. If such a feeling could exist under such circumstances, with how much more force must it act, with how much greater facility must

* The Roué.

it make its progress, in a heart educated only to the decorums of society, and to the appearances of the world; and where there was no other principle than such as had been founded in the decencies and ceremonies of life. These forms may bind the cold and passionless; but they are insufficient, indeed, to preserve a passionate heart, like that of Lady Olivia's, from the errors and feelings by which it may be misled.

Woodville, whose senses alone were engaged in his amatory pursuits, and who possessed no other feelings than such as arose from their gratification, was unconscious of the character of the woman whose heart he was inspiring with a passion of which his own heartlessness had no conception. His former liaisons had been in general broken with as much ease as they had been formed; indifference had succeeded success on his part: and his consequent neglect, with the aid of a little female pride, had generally produced the same result on the other side. But with Lady Olivia this could never be the case. Indifference formed no part of her mercurial composition; if she loved, she loved with

intensity; and it was nothing but contempt for the object, that could prevent her hating with the same vividness of feeling. Lady Olivia's countenance was no hypocrite. In her dark eye blazed all the warmer passions of her soul; and her lips were but too apt to give utterance to the sentiments which it inspired.

Married to a man she detested; with no friend with whom she could sympathise; oppressed by feelings ungratified, and passions that had no object; no wonder that the insidious attentions and apparent sympathy of such a man as Woodville, should, in the first instance, attract, and ultimately mislead her. When, at length, the word love unhappily became substituted for that of friendship in their intercourse with each other, Lady Olivia gave up her whole soul to the sentiment; Woodville's high-sounding phrases were taken by her for the expression of real feeling, and she imagined him as much the victim to an uncontrolable passion as herself. She little knew that it was in her boudoir alone that this exhibition of feeling existed; she little imagined that he could derive the same

enjoyment now from the heartless pleasures of society, in a continued round of which he was engaged; and that while she was sitting alone, absorbed in thoughts of him, who was becoming her destiny, and pondering with an intensity of thought upon that sacrifice of character, the world, and every thing that is dear in it, for his sake, that he was pursuing his customary heartless round of amusement, and paying his attentions indiscriminately, wherever there was a hope of a pleasure, or the chance of a gratified vanity.

Yet such was the case; and such has generally been the case in more than two-thirds of those instances in which woman has sacrificed so much; and man has gained the reputation and the disgrace of casting the woman who loved him out of the pale of society, and consigning her to that class of the degraded of her sex, for whom

E'en the merciful have no mercy.

Olivia's early passion she now felt to have been the love of a mere girl, who did not understand the feeling. It had been mixed up with

roses, and moonlight, and sonnets, and all the love-sick food with which boys and girls pamper each other into ideas that lead so often to marriage, and so frequently to misery. She looked back upon it as a traveller, while leaning under a stately palm tree, or clinging for support to a sturdy oak, would look back upon the reed of the wilderness, or the rose of the parterre. And Olivia, indeed, imagined Woodville's love to be her oak amidst the storm—her palm tree amidst the wilderness of her desolate feelings. She thought, believing and deceived, as so many thousands have been before her, and will be after her, that she was as much the whole world to Woodville as her heart had made him to her; and when she meditated almost to madness upon the sacrifice which she felt herself but too capable of making, she imagined that it was a sacrifice that he would rejoice in making also. Olivia could not enter into, or imagine, Woodville's compromising system; and though her principles had not sufficient strength to resist the influence of overpowering passion and perpetual temptation, she would have disdained en-

joying the position which the husband she betrayed conferred upon her; and despised him too much to think of deceiving him.

A judicious friend might have saved such a woman as this; but she had none; and the bitter feelings with which she regarded her mother, aud the want of principle in that natural protector and adviser, deprived her of all influence, even though she only attempted to inculcate worldly prudence.

Whispers were already abroad, derogatory to her fair fame as a woman, and to her character as a wife. Initials and inuendoes, too palpable for misconstruction, began to appear in those infamous periodicals which exist only as the panders of scandal, and by the inroads they make into the privacy of domestic life. Woodville was jested with upon the subject by the heartless, who are the only ones that ever do jest upon such a subject; and, still more heartless than they, he denied the insinuation, while a smile of triumph, upon the very lips that uttered the denial, confirmed the truth of the supposition. How many men thus "damn with a faint

denial" the character of a woman quite as completely as they could by an open boast of their success. Coteries of the rigid censors, or censoresses, of morals began to be held at the different parties where she still appeared; cordial shakes of the hand were exchanged for formal bows of mere recognition; a far less plentiful supply of cards covered the hall table, in Portland-place; while the drawing-rooms were no longer graced by its greatest ornaments.

The only persons who appeared to be insensible to this change were Mr. and Lady Olivia Tressel themselves. The former had not a friend in the world true enough to speak candidly to on him the subject; and as yet there was none who cared enough about him, good-naturedly to make him unhappy upon the subject; while the latter was too much absorbed in one object to notice, or to care about, the conduct and actions of a world that was indifferent to her. What were all the ceremonies of life to her whose only hope was in one object? what signified the coldness of hundreds to her who only looked for a reciprocal warmth of feeling in one?

Woodville, who looked no farther than the gratification of the moment, was not at all aware of the kind of passion he had inspired, because he was himself incapable of such a feeling. His principle was pleasure, but pleasure with as little trouble as possible; he encouraged no passion that was likely to make an inroad either upon his heart or his health. He had never passed a sleepless night for a woman in his life; and any one who had created him a moment's pain, or given him any other trouble than the common pleasures of the pursuit, would have been struck out of his memory with as much ease as the memorandum of an appointment with her could have been struck out of his pocket-book.

Could he have known the sort of heart that Lady Olivia possessed, his calculating selfishness would have induced him to have forgone the pursuit. But, like a child, or an idiot, he had thrown a flaming brand into a powder-mill, unconscious of the danger, and unaware of the explosion.

That fruition, which would have cooled the ardour of Woodville, was only an additional incentive to that of Lady Olivia. The world, her

husband, her character, her ties, all sunk into absolute nothingness in comparison with his love; and when Woodville himself felt the necessity for prudence, and began to dread an exposé, of which he could not help being the joint victim to a certain extent, she could scarcely listen with patience to his entreaties for circumspection; and submitted with a very ill grace to that preservation of appearances which he dictated for the present. Still, as he founded this argument only on the excess of his love for her, she did not perceive that it actually arose from a diminution of his passion, and from a selfish fear of the consequences; and imagined, therefore, that he experienced the same agony at this temporary suspension of their usual intercourse, which prudence prescribed, as she did herself.

For three days this prudent conduct had been sustained, so far as only seeing Woodville as an ordinary acquaintance, in a morning call, and avoiding meeting him in public. But Lady Olivia found that she could not bring her mind to endure the tedium of society without him; and, during this interval, she was denied to

every body else, and, in the solitude of her boudoir, gave herself up wholly to thoughts of him. In these three days of solitary imaginings, her passion made a greater progress than ever. Her privation of Woodville's society, merely out of regard to a formal and cold-hearted world, gave her a greater contempt and hatred for this world than she had felt before; Woodville's absence became agony, and she imagined him suffering under the same feelings. Her husband's presence, which she only endured at those hours when even the most disunited couples, that are not formally separated, meet, became still more detestable than ever. The second night of this attempt at prudence was passed by her in sleepless agony, in spite of all the narcotics that she swallowed to procure a temporary oblivion. If, for an instant, she dozed, Woodville appeared in her dreams, either pale with suffering at this violence done to their mutual loves, or, seduced from his allegiance to her, by the temptations of some rival. From sleep, and dreams such as these, she awoke only the more feverish, and during the whole day her

mind dwelt upon her situation with such intensity, that, losing sight of every thing but her feelings for Woodville, and her separation from him, she determined upon some desperate step, which should at once give Woodville a decided proof of her love, and render this preservation of appearances no longer necessary.

This had been the first day that Woodville had not called; and her imagination pictured a thousand accidents and illnesses that had prevented his usual visit.

The state of unnatural excitement which had led to this determination, and which was increased by its adoption, scarcely permitted her to think, much less to know what she was about, and deprived her of all power to regulate her actions. She watched the fading daylight with impatience, and hailed the darkness of the evening as the harbinger of her liberty. Without changing the hat in which she had been sitting, she hastily threw on her cloak, and hurrying down the stairs, which were at this hour deserted by the servants, she passed the porter, who was

asleep in the hall, unperceived, and made her way into the street.

At the first stand that presented itself, Lady Olivia called the first hackney coach she had ever entered in her life, and, directing the coachman to drive to the residence of Mr. Woodville in Bruton-street, threw herself back, in the carriage and gave herself up to the reflections which forced themselves into her mind.

The die was cast; she had shut the door between herself and society for ever; she had crossed the rubicon over which there was no repassing; she knew that she was giving up character, splendour, power; and this devoted woman felt rather a glory than a shame in the sacrifice.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE RESULT.

Sometimes she comes with a tithe-pig's tail,
Tickling a parson's sides as he lays asleep;
And then dreams he of another benefice.

SHAKSPEARE.

Thus torn, defaced, and wretched as I seem,
Still I have something of Sciolto's virtue.

I have more real anguish in my heart
Than all that pedant discipline e'er knew."

FAIR PENITENT.

WHETHER the difference between the feelings and actions of a man and woman under the same circumstances, arises from their original nature, or their education, we must leave to philosophers to determine. That the difference exists there is no doubt:

'Tis true 'tis pity—and pity 'tis 'tis true.

but we can only say such things are. We can only describe, because we only know, the effects; and we must leave the causes to deeper thinkers than ourselves, and to graver pages than those of a novel. Our glance only sweeps over its surface, and our readers must therefore be content with the superficies of society.

At about the same moment that Lady Olivia, deserting her splendid mansion, turning her back upon the elegancies and luxuries of high life, and forsaking fame, fortune, character, and all that is generally dearest to woman, for the sake of one feeling, which absorbed her whole soul; the heartless object of this passion was coolly pouring out libations of burgundy to the success of a new danseuse, who had just astonished the fashionable world with her *pirouettes* and *entrechats;* and enjoying himself at one of those "olla podrida" parties which were in general assembled around the table of our friend Lascelles; who by this time had made a tremendous inroad into his once splendid fortune, sad havock in an excellent constitution, and a rapid stride in the road to ruin.

It was but seldom that the elegant Woodville joined these "*partis fines;*" but now and then he found their contrast a relief from those entertainments afforded by more formal dinner-givers; and the liberty he felt in being freed from what he had already begun to consider the thraldom of Lady Olivia, had given him a buoyancy of spirits that seemed to require a greater license of wine and words than he could indulge in more select society. The fact was, that during the three days spent by Lady Olivia in such a storm of contending feelings that the agony of one hour was only exceeded by that of the next, and in which she had brooded over her ill-fated passion until it became madness; and while she imagined her lover enduring the same sufferings, Woodville had been resuming his usual avocations, which the temporary absorption of his time by his attentions to Lady Olivia had interrupted.

A "*parti fine*" is one of those expressions which we use for things which we are ashamed to speak of in plain English. It is a society to which men of doubtful character, and women of no character at all, or who are at least careless

of it, are admitted to the association of men of rank and fashion, who despise them in the midst of their familiarity.

The dinner of the day was given by Lascelles, both in honour of the new danseuse, as well as of the induction of his latinising friend Harry Vaux to the living which had been promised ever since they had parted at college. News had arrived a few days before of the death of the incumbent; and the letter announcing the intelligence, had been brought by the curate, who had for many years performed all the duties of the pulpit, which had then become vacant by the death of the vicar. This reverend gentleman had brought a strong recommendation, and an earnest request, from one of Lascelles's late guardians, that he might succeed to the vacant living. This request was backed by testimonials of the excellent and christian-like conduct of the worthy curate, for more than twenty years, signed by every individual in the parish; and accompanied by a modest letter of his own, setting forth, not his merits, but his wants; not his virtues, but his numerous family; and humbly

entreating the attention of Lascelles to the recommendations of his friends and flock, and petitioning that, at any rate, he might not be removed from a spot where, in the hands of Providence, he had been the humble instrument of good. At the moment of this arrival, Lascelles and Vaux were lounging over a late breakfast, and endeavouring by means of savoury viands to tempt appetites which had been palled by the debauch of the previous evening.

"You're a lucky fellow, Vaux," said Lascelles, throwing his guardian's letter across the table; "the vicar of —— is dead, and you are a parson with eight hundred a year—But what is this brobdignag letter about? Zounds, here's all the parish petitioning for the curate;" and Lascelles seemed to ponder, while Vaux, hastily swallowing an anchovy, awaited his next words with some little anxiety. "Well, come we can settle that. You are not very fit for the duties of a vicar; and, besides, I can't spare you: so you shall have the living, and retain the curate, doubling the poor devil's salary, for the sake of

his ten children. You may raise the tithes, and then it will not deteriorate the living."

"*Curat* reponi *deterioribus*—Horace," exclaimed Vaux, whose senses had scarcely recovered from his nightly orgies.

The living was thus decided, and the poor curate dismissed back to his duties, content with the increase of his former salary, and with his non-removal; as he had hardly dared to hope, with his more sanguine friends, for the living itself.

"Come Vaux, we must have a dinner upon this," said Lascelles; and accordingly a dinner was given to celebrate the two events, of the appearance of the new danseuse, with whom a lordly friend had formed a continental friendship, and had given her an introduction to Lascelles, on her coming to England; and Vaux's succession to the living.

The party consisted of the danseuse, and one of those elderly, snuffy gentlewomen who usually travel in the company of *artistes* of this stamp, under the title of "ma mêre," or "ma tante," for the preservation of their propriety, and their

pearls. The only other females present, were an "*entretenue*" of a noble peer, who mistook impudence and effrontery for elegance and ease, and who laughed at what she called draggle-tailed virtue that waded through the mud on foot, while she triumphantly splashed its professors in her dashing chariot; and a divorcée, who was forced by her companion into the party, where she sat with the face of a Magdalen, pale, silent, and thoughtful, shrinking from the rude gaze of the party, and sickening at the boisterous mirth which seemed a mockery to the sadness of her own heart.

This table, in point of conversation, was a Tower of Babel in miniature; a hodge-podge of broken English, French, and Italian; neither of them in some instances at all conspicuous for their purity, either in expression or sentiment; while Vaux's latin bowled in periodically, like a great gun in the clatter of musketry.

Such was the party in which Woodville was passing an evening, so differently spent by Lady Olivia for his sake; and in which the exuberance of his spirits almost made up for the ab-

sence of Langley, whose chair was vacant, and "couvert" unoccupied; for it was to this dinner that he had sent his excuses on the day on which the éclaircissement had taken place between his wife and her uncle.

Men should always be present; for their characters and concerns are never safe, even with their friends. There is always a good Mrs. Candour, a Sir Benjamin Backbite, or a Lady Sneerwell, to hint at ruin, anticipate a misfortune, or predict a faux pas, or a failure; and poor Langley's circumstances were commented on pretty freely.

"Oh, he's going down rapidly," said one, "and looks cursed seedy."

"Yet his humour and genius are as great as ever," observed Woodville.

"Certâ *sede* manet; *humor* et in *genas*—Horace," said Vaux.

"Well," said Lascelles, "he's a good fellow, after all; and as to the old huncks that has got his fortune, I wish he was at the bottom of the sea, for he has made me pay him sixteen per cent. for the last five thousand that I borrowed

from the Shylock, to pay my losses upon that cursed Irish pony race at the Curragh."

"*Pone* sub *curru*," muttered Vaux.

"By the bye, Vaux, your induction sermon shall be against usury," continued Lascelles; "and you shall prove to your parishioners that the greatest jews in this land are the christians. It will do your flock good, and prevent their being fleeced."

This produced a general laugh from those who always laugh at their host's jokes; the French girl raised her eyebrows and her shoulders; and "ma tante" took a pinch of rappee.

"Your patron is jocose," observed one of the guests.

"*Jocose* Mæcenas," answered Vaux.

"Ah, oui, la belle Florence. J'y ai dansé beaucoup—oh beaucoup, Monsieur," said Mademoiselle.

"Mon dieu, oui," echoed ma tante.

"Je me souviens de vous avoir vu; et me trouvais fort enchanté d'un pas seul que vous avez donné," said Woodville, who was getting up a liaison with the danseuse.

"Et vous y avez un Ministre qui aime l'opera, beaucoup, oh beaucoup, Monsieur."

"Oh mon dieu, oui," again echoed ma tante.

"*Opera* vehemente *minister*—Horace," interrupted Vaux.

"What!" exclaimed the entretenue, in any thing rather than the sotto voce of a lady; "do you mean to tell me that Mrs. Beaufort is handsome? why, look at her large eyes—and then her complexion is covered with pimples."

"*Pimplea* dulcis—Horace again," said Vaux.

"Capital hock this, Lascelles, and quite in right order."

"Rectius *hoc* est."

The wine had by this time taken effect upon some of the party. The danseuse, and her companion, who had never been in England before, again raised their eyebrows and shoulders with astonishment; and were evidently delighted when the entretenue, upon whom the champagne had likewise operated, not at all to the advantage of her faculties or politeness, made a motion to retire. The old adage of "*in vino veritas*" is never so well exemplified as in the really vul-

gar "would-be" genteel. It throws off the mask at once, and out pops the real character with the force that a spring toy bursts from its confinement, when the lid of the box, which compresses and conceals it, is removed. It was thus with this female; low-born and vulgar by nature, her beauty had attracted the attentions, which had placed her in a situation, in which, because she enjoyed the luxuries, she thought she could imitate the airs of a fine lady; which, in her ideas, consisted in insolence, effrontery, fine clothes, and fine words. But, unable to restrain her natural propensities, champagne produced the same effect upon her in May-fair, as gin did upon her humbler prototype in Billingsgate. And yet this was the companion of a nobleman, and preferred by him to the elegant and accomplished mistress of his house and family.

"A fine woman; but a little gone, by G—," exclaimed one of the turf guests of Lascelles.

"No such thing; an odious libel upon the fair;" retorted the gentleman who had been most attentive to her.

"*Odium* que *libellis.*"

"Speak of the *ladies* with decorum," said another.

"Vel cum *decorum* — Horace," hiccupped Vaux.

"Come, Lascelles, let's be off to C——'s; we have enough of wine and Venus, so now for the dice," cried a noted gambler, who had won thousands of Lascelles' money.

"*Venus* arbitrium *dicet* bibendus."

Woodville, who had become tired of the set, and was anxious to start on his round of evening parties, had just been answered that his carriage was not come, when a servant came into the room, and presented him with a crumpled piece of paper upon a silver salver.

The contents of this note were so rudely written in pencil, that Woodville was at first at a loss to decypher them. When, however, he saw the well-known initials of "O. T." at the bottom, and read the words "I am here—come directly," written above them, his heart smote him, not with a sense of his own conduct, but with that sort of presentiment which sometimes predicts to our inward self some personal evil.

"Does any body wait?" asked he half whispering.

"At the door, Sir," answered the servant in the same low tone.

"A woman! a woman!" was whispered round the table. Even at this moment his wretched vanity produced a smile upon the features of Woodville as this insinuation struck upon his ear; and away went this "Homme à bonnes fortunes," to see the effects of them.

Woodville not seeing the blazing lamps of the dashing vis-a-vis, in which Lady Olivia generally moved about at night, asked where the carriage was. "The lady is in a hackney-coach, Sir."

"A hackney coach!" repeated Woodville, his heart misgiving him; "very extraordinary!"

As the hall door opened a rush of wind and rain made him recoil, and desire the servant to wrap his cloak close round him. His person thus fortified against the effects of the weather, he picked his way over the pavement, to the wretched hackney in which Lady Olivia was

waiting in all the tortures of suspense and impatience.

On taking the coach she had driven directly to Woodville's door, and on being informed that he was dining out; a piece of information which came with a chilling sensation upon her agitated feelings, she sent for his own man; who, deceived by the hackney coach, and by the manner in which her face was concealed, not knowing Lady Olivia, at first refused to tell where Woodville was dining; but, judging by her voice that she was young, and the brightness of her eyes not being concealed by her cloak, he thought as his master was dining at bachelor's that there could be no harm in giving the information.

"Good God! Lady Olivia," exclaimed Woodville, in a tone in which anger was quite as predominant as surprize, as he thrust the officious servant on one side and leaped into the coach; anxious, both to get out of the pelting rain, and to prevent an exposé.

"Oh, thank Heaven! thank Heaven! you

are here," answered Lady Olivia, half shriekingly.

"Where shall I drive," said Woodville, half distracted, and scarcely knowing what to do.

"Where you will—where you please—Woodville—I am yours—yours only, and for ever."

"Drive on to Park Lane," cried out Woodville; and, as almost in a passion he drew up the glasses to prevent the impertinent observations which he perceived the scene attracted from the servants, the coach moved on.

"Oh, Woodville!" exclaimed the unhappy and guilty Lady Olivia, "Thank God! thank God! I am with you;" and she threw herself upon Woodville's bosom, and sobbed violently and convulsively.

Woodville, in spite of her agitation and distress, felt himself too selfishly interested, to sooth her with the tenderness her situation required; nor could he sufficiently command himself, as usual, to imitate the passion he did not feel.

"How came you here, and in such a vehicle?" asked he in a voice, the tone of which

would have made her shudder had not her extreme agitation prevented her from observing it.

"I could bear it no longer; Woodville—I am yours—all yours—your own Olivia," sobbed Lady Olivia, "in spite of the cold and heartless world—oh such a three days—it was too much," and with a voice *entre coupé*, (we have no English word to express that interruption created by internal agonies,) she detailed those feelings which had led to the desperate step she had taken, of deserting her home.

During this period, Woodville was entirely occupied by his own selfish fears of the natural consequences of such a step. The Courts of King's Bench and Common Pleas appeared to his imagination in full array against him; his ears seemed to tingle with the cutting sarcasms of Brougham, and the vivid pictures of conjugal infidelity drawn by Charles Phillips; while a verdict with ten thousand pounds damages seemed to stare him in the face, written in large characters on the back of the coach.

As these thoughts revolved quickly in his

mind, he could almost have cursed the object that had incurred the danger of their realization, and in spite of himself, the word "Imprudent," burst from his lips.

Had a serpent stung her, Lady Olivia could not have recoiled with more horror from its sting than she did from the bosom of Woodville as this word struck her ear uttered by the man for whom she had braved all—for whom she had forsaken all.

Her tears seemed to be scorched up at their source, and to dry suddenly on her cheeks, as, breathless, she repeated the word. She gazed intensely on the countenance of Woodville, with a glaring eye that sought to penetrate the darkness by which she was surrounded, as well as the mind of her companion in that darkness.

"And is it you," uttered, or rather breathed Lady Olivia, in a whisper which seemed to the ear of Woodville louder than her loudest tones; "Is it you who talk of prudence? you, for whom I have done this—you who have driven me to madness, and who have plunged me down the precipice, on the brink of which others had

placed me, but which I should have escaped but for your helping hand!"

During this speech, Woodville, who, by the glare of the lamps as they passed and momentarily lighted up the coach, had caught glimpses of her glazed eye, and pale countenance, the features of which seemed set in the rigidity of marble, became alarmed, and attempted to sooth her.

"But, Lady Olivia—dear Lady Olivia, I have no wish but for your good."

"My good!" repeated she, mechanically, "my good!"

"Yes, dear Olivia, consider the consequences, the world!——"

"Consequences!" repeated she in the same tone—"consequences!" and, talking to herself as though she were alone, "and he talks of consequences, while I have forgotten the crime; character, home, name, country, I have all resigned—and HE talks of consequences!—the world—the heartless world!—that I have despised for him—that I have rejected for him—and he talks of the world!"

"Nay, Lady Olivia, calm yourself," pursued Woodville, more alarmed by this frightful quietude, than by any violence of passion she could exhibit.

"Calm! I am calm, Mr. Woodville."

It was in vain that Woodville now exerted all the tenderness he could assume. His first word had shot like an ice bolt through her heart; and though it outwardly appeared to have calmed the violence of her passions, it seemed to have painfully increased the power of her penetration. The character of Woodville —of the man she had loved to madness—the man for whom she had resigned every-thing that was dear to her sex, appeared suddenly to her in all its native and acquired heartlessness. Not all the tenderness of his tones, not all the honey of his words, could disguise the fact of his selfishness; his hypocrisy had started suddenly into existence, and, like Banquo's Ghost, remained to taunt her with the greatness of her crime as well as with its uselessness.

She now listened to him in silence, as though she would see how far his selfishness would lead

him; till he, deceived by her coolness, ventured again to talk of the ulterior consequences of the step she had taken to both of them, and proposed her return.

She had sat with the stillness of a statue, but though all was still without, the mischief was not idle within. Though the apex of Etna is quiet and calm, the fire does not burn with less violence under the surface of the mountain. A slight shudder was manifest at this proposal to return; and she again said, or rather breathed, "Return—yes—yes—return—certainly—return;" and she suddenly and convulsively pulled the check string.

"Now that's my good—kind Lady Olivia, and your Woodville will never be ungrateful."

As the coachman opened the door, Woodville would have ordered him to drive in the direction of Portland-place, but Lady Olivia, keeping back the door with her hand, motioned him to quit the coach; Woodville hesitated, and would have argued.

"Leave me, Woodville—leave me Mr. Woodville."

"I cannot—I dare not; let me see you near your own house."

"Leave me, I say; I insist—I *will* be left."

"But will you promise me to go home," said Woodville, who saw resistance to her will to be useless, and who thought he might follow the coach to see her in safety, though, even at this moment, the inclemency of the night was not without its influence on the selfishness of his personal feelings.

"*Home*!—yes—I will go HOME! Away, Sir, touch me not;" and she recoiled from a half proffered embrace with the same disgust that she would have done from the slime of some venomous reptile.

"But to-morrow, Lady Olivia—to-morrow I may see you?" asked Woodville.

"Yes—yes," answered she, emphatically; to-morrow you shall see me." An impatient motion of her hand now hurried his departure, and he quitted the coach.

As the coachman put up the steps, and closed the door, Lady Olivia said:

"Drive fast—fast—very fast;" and in obeying

these orders he soon baffled Woodville's attempts to follow the coach.

In the mean time the family in Portland-place was not in the most tranquil state.

Lady Olivia's woman having occasion to speak to her, and not finding her in the boudoir, knowing there was no company, sought her in the drawing-rooms. These being deserted, she ventured into the library, where Mr. Tressel was brooding over his domestic misfortunes and his wife's extravagances in solitude. Disturbed by the intrusion, he angrily demanded the cause.

"I thought my Lady might be here," pertly answered Mrs. Venner.

"Here! how should she be here?" exclaimed Tressel, in a voice which half frightened even Mrs. Venner; and a lady's maid is seldom frightened by any husband who is disliked by her mistress.

"Why, Sir, my Lady is not in her boudoir, nor in the drawing-rooms—"

"Well then, she's gone out, I suppose."

"Oh dear no, Sir; my Lady did not order her carriage this evening, at all, Sir."

"Not order her carriage! you must be mis-

taken," exclaimed Tressel, and ringing the bell violently, he desired his man to see if Lady Olivia's coachman was in the house. In the mean time Mrs. Venner ran again into the boudoir, the drawing-rooms, and her Lady's bed and dressing-rooms without finding her.

Lady Olivia's coachman was in the house, as well as all her own particular servants, and the carriage had not been ordered.

Unable to control himself, or to hide his own suspicions from the servants, he ordered the porter into his library. The porter, however, had not seen his lady, though he now recollected having been awakened by the shutting of the door, about two hours before this interrogation took place; but, imagining that it might have been one of his fellow-servants, he had taken no notice of it.

Tressel ordered his carriage, and leaving the servants to form their own conjectures, drove to Orville House, and from thence followed the Countess through her evening's round, until he found her deep in the mysteries of écarté at a soirée of old Lady P———s.

Scarcely noticing any of the company, he ap-

proached the Countess, and whispered intelligence and suspicions, at which, in spite of all her self-command, even her cheek became blanched, while her heart sickened at the dread that came over her. Yet, feeling the necessity for concealment, she controled herself sufficiently to say, "Ha! is it so late? and Lady Olivia waiting? Fitzroy, play my cards for me; and let me know my losses or winnings in the morning." And, so saying, she apologized to her party, and taking a hasty leave of the hostess, left the room on Tressel's arm, as though nothing extraordinary had happened. She was sensible that Tressel had named Olivia too loud in his whisper not to make it known that he had been speaking about her; and it was this that made the Countess, in her reply, allude to her daughter. She was sensible that Lady Olivia's future fame depended upon a thread, and that a breath might destroy it for ever. It was not till they were seated in the carriage that Lady Orville permitted Tressel to enter into any particulars; and when he had told her all, though her heart misgave her, yet, wishing to doubt, she affected to disbelieve

the servants, and drove to every place where it was likely Lady Olivia might be found, but all in vain. Tired of the useless pursuit, the carriage was at length ordered to Portland-place, where the servants had yet received no tidings of their mistress.

It was in vain that Lady Orville urged the impolicy of questioning servants who knew nothing; and still argued vehemently that her daughter must be with some friend, and would no doubt return. Tressel, with his usual obstinacy, turned a deaf ear to her remonstrances, and in some measure relieved his agitation by continuing his inquisition.

At length the Countess succeeded in persuading him to dismiss the servants; and they sat in the solitude of the large and splendid drawing-room in silence. Neither of them ventured even another conjecture; the truth was becoming more evident with each succeeding minute. They sat thus wrapped in mute conjecture gazing upon each other, until their silence was interrupted by one loud and single knock at the hall-door. The stroke of the spirit of the Commen-

datore at the door of his apartment, did not startle Don Juan more than this single application of the knocker startled Mr. Tressel and Lady Orville.

It seemed to strike them both to the heart. In another minute a slight bustle was heard on the staircase; and the next, the drawing-room door was thrown open, and Lady Olivia stood before her astonished husband and mother.

Her clothes were drenched with rain; her feathers were broken and hung over her now mis-shapen hat; her ermine cloak hung loosely over one shoulder; her face was deadly pale; and her raven locks hung straight and dripping over her shoulders; while her dark eyes shone with an unnatural brightness.

Lady Orville motioned the servants, who had preceded and followed their mistress into the room, to retire; and, approaching Lady Olivia, exclaimed, "Thank God! thank God!"

"Thank God!" repeated Lady Olivia, in a voice that appeared almost sepulchral, and yet unnaturally calm; "For what? What should you thank God for?"

"That you are returned."

"That I am returned!—ha! ha!—returned a guilty and polluted thing; a violator of sacred vows; a breaker of God's commandments—"

"She raves!—she raves!" exclaimed the Countess, interrupting her; but Tressel's heart told him that she spoke the truth; and though his indignation would have burst forth against both mother and daughter, his pity for the latter kept him silent; for even the sordid feelings of Tressel were affected by the deep and unutterable distress before him, and subjugated by the almost unearthly appearance of his young and still beautiful wife.

"And for whom—for whom have I done this?—a heartless reveller—a wretch without feeling—" pursued Lady Olivia. "Tressel," said she, suddenly, "forgive me—to you I owe—" she would have sunk on her knees, but an inward agony seemed to overcome her, and she fell almost lifeless on the sofa. The Countess hung over her distracted; Tressel instinctively rang the bell for assistance; while the increasing paleness of Olivia, the glaring of her eyes, and a slight saliva that bubbled into foam at the lips,

created a suspicion too horrible for a mother to entertain for a moment without madness. At this instant, another loud single knock was heard at the door, which was immediately followed by the intelligence that the coachman who had brought Lady Olivia home, and whom the servants had forgotten to discharge, wished to know if he must wait.

"The coachman!" said Lady Orville, the thought striking her that he might solve the mystery, and perhaps relieve the worst of her fears; "let me see him!" and, in an instant, she was herself in the hall, and, ordering the man into the waiting room, shut the door, and questioned him closely. The man told her of his first drive to Bruton-street, and afterwards to Lascelles's; and the subsequent history of the gentleman's leaving the coach in Park-lane. And Lady Orville cursed Woodville bitterly, and from the bottom of her heart. After this he had driven to the ends of various streets, and waited for her several times, while the lady quitted the coach for short periods. This was all he knew. The Countess's next impulse was to search the coach: and, seizing a

lamp that stood in the hall, she proceeded to do this herself in spite of the inclemency of the weather. Here the sight of several small phials, with one of larger dimensions, at once cleared the mystery of Olivia's illness, and verified the prophetic fears of the Countess.

Almost frantic, she quitted the coach, and hurrying the servants in different directions for medical assistance, she rushed to the drawing room, where Lady Olivia lay with her head upon the bosom of her woman, who was wiping off the cold damp dews that hung in large drops on her forehead. Tressel was watching her with a countenance in which pity struggled with the sternness of its expression while his eye rested upon his wife; but the sternness only prevailed as he glanced at the Countess.

The face of Lady Olivia had become more ghastly; a livid hue had overspread its former paleness, and the damps had settled likewise upon the upper parts of the cheeks. The lips were nearly as white as the rest of her face, and the foam discoloured them still more; her fingers moved convulsively, and were alternately

tightly clasped or stretched to their utmost extent; while a slight contortion, as though arising from some inward and excessive pain, agitated her whole frame. Her eye was glazed and motionless, except when some sharper pang gave them a momentary expression of agonized existence.

Her lips moved, and the words, "Who is that?" were rather breathed than uttered, as her glazed eye seemed to rest on Tressel.

"Your husband—Olivia," said the Countess.

"Husband!" and her whole frame seemed to thrill with agony at the word, and the consciousness which it produced.

"And you—who are *you?*"

"Your mother—your mother, Olivia."

"Mother!" said she; "I have no mother; I never had a mother—" These words, though merely breathed forth, were painfully audible; immediately that she had uttered them her eyes became fixed; a slight convulsion was heard in the throat; the lips turned purple; the foam forced itself through the clenched teeth, and the lower part of the face dropped nearly on the breast.

Several hurried knocks now announced the arrival of all that skill which aristocracy and wealth can command at midnight as speedily as at noon; but Lady Olivia was beyond the aid of medicine. Her spirit had fled into the presence of that Being who shows, in his perfection, more mercy to the errors of mortals, than they find in the severer judgment of their frail and fellow beings.

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